



OLD PETER GREELEY.

THE
VOYAGE OF THE CONSTANCE

A TALE OF THE POLAR SEAS.

BY
MARY GILLIES.

Illustrated with Eight Engravings
DRAWN ON THE WOOD BY CHARLES KEENE.

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PREFACE.

It has been my purpose to make the following tale not only a tale, but a complete history of Arctic adventure and discovery condensed into a small space. It has seemed to me that the young ought to know the eventful story of the perils, the sufferings, and the triumphs of their countrymen, and of brave men of other nations, in those icy regions during the course of three centuries. The beginning of this story we know, and its end we have witnessed only a few weeks since; Captain M'Clintock's return, after discovering the last traces of Franklin, has probably brought it to a close.

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A great amount of knowledge in various sciences has been gained by the labours of Arctic explorers, and if many efforts have failed and many valuable lives have been lost, yet there have been so many instances of courage, devotion to duty, and wonderful escapes, that the whole leaves on the mind a feeling of high hope and pleasure rather than of gloom.

To make my account trustworthy, I have consulted all the best authorities on the subject, and carefully read the modern books of voyages, from Ross and Parry downwards. For Sir John Ross's four years in Boothia, and his escape in the boats, I had the advantage of knowing an old sailor who was with him throughout, being one of the "Victory's" crew, and who himself gave me the whole account, besides many stories about the polar regions and adventures among the ice. For the discovery of the North-west Passage, and rescue of the crew of the "Investigator," I am indebted to Captain Osborne's two volumes; and for the Middle Pack in Baffin's Bay, and the battle

with the ice in escaping from it, and much else, to Dr. Kane. In all my descriptions of nature and its changes in the various seasons, I have endeavoured, in the minutest particulars, to be strictly correct.

With this explanation "The Voyage of the 'Constance'" is offered to my young readers, to speak for itself.

M. G.

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THE

VOYAGE OF THE CONSTANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

It was a fine evening in May, after a heavy shower of rain, and the setting sun had turned the vapour that rose from the grass and young leaves and spring flowers into melted gold. The fir-woods were covered with rain-drops hanging from every point, and every tree looked like a lady decked in glittering jewels. The nightingales sang clear and loud in the neighbouring copse; and a whole chorus of black-birds, thrushes, and woodlarks, were heard in the distance at every pause.

In the midst of all this beauty and this music was a pretty cottage, half buried among the fir-trees; but you could easily see that whoever lived there was too fond of beauty to let the trees have entirely their own way, and grow as they liked, for openings had been made among them, so as not only to have a greensward and a terrace-walk near the cottage, but distant views towards the Hampshire hills that bounded the view to the south, and peeps of the pine-woods and heaths that are so common in this part of Surrey,

and look all the wilder and fresher because they are surrounded by rich and verdant country clothed with spreading trees.

All was so quiet round this cottage that you might have thought it was uninhabited, and yet there were assembled near the open drawing-room window a party not usually silent for very long together, consisting of a boy of about fifteen, his sister two or three years younger, and a fine large black-and-white Newfoundland dog, who lay at their feet, and sometimes shut his eyes as if asleep, sometimes joined in sympathy with them in gazing up into the air; for they were intently looking up over the tree-tops, and only moved now and then to cast searching glances among the pigeons that were pruning their feathers on the roof of the stable where the pigeon-house was, or flying home and settling in the nests for the night.

"I am beginning to despair of our poor little Sir Launcelot this evening, Edward," said the young girl. "Aunt Mary would not send him off after eight o'clock this morning, she said she would not."

"No, I feel afraid, too, that something has gone wrong. He ought to fly this distance in ten hours, and it is past seven now; eleven hours since eight o'clock."

"Either she has delayed for some reason or other, or he has flown away and is not coming back to us at all; and yet I can hardly believe that, after all the pains we have taken."

"No more can I. Sir Launcelot is a capital fellow, and as true as steel. If anything has happened to him I shall go wild."

"And I shall be so sorry to lose the little darling, but that will be nothing compared to the disappointment it will be if we cannot train him."

"It's a great deal too soon to despair, Maggie," said Edward, after a little silence. "I'll tell you what! I shall go and look into the nests. Who knows but he has come back without our seeing him, though we have watched so closely, and has gone snugly to bed, tired with his long journey?"

As he spoke he jumped up and began to climb to the stable-roof, by the help of some trellis and an old pear-tree that covered the gable end. He soon reached it, and crawled along on hands and knees towards the pigeon-house. The dog had run with him to the wall, and now stood watching him, giving short barks and whines from time to time.

"Do take care, Edward," cried Margaret, "you frighten me so when you climb about in that way!"

Edward did not answer, but reached the pigeon-house very safely, and looked into the different nests.

"Two eggs here!" he said, talking to himself, "and two pretty little young ones here; Launcy's children. I wonder what has become of his wife? Gone to bring them their supper, I suppose. I wish I could get Maggie up to see. I shall get out the ladder to-morrow, and make her climb up and look at them. No!" he shouted, in answer to her inquiring looks. "There is no Sir Launcelot here!" Then he mounted to the highest point of the roof, and began to look all round.

"I do believe he's coming," he cried, after about five minutes.

"Edward! do you really?"

"Oh, no, it's only the first rook. Here come all the rest in a body, cawing and flapping their wings. I am sure I beg your pardon, noble knight, for mistaking a crow for you."

Margaret was still looking up eagerly.

"It's only the rooks going home!" he shouted.

"Oh, yes, I see them now, and hear them too," she replied. "They look very pretty against the red sky, but a glimpse of little grey Launcy would be worth them all ten times over," she added, in a lower tone.

A silence of five minutes followed. Edward was perched on the highest peak that could be reached, and looked steadily towards the north. Margaret felt a little anxious at his dangerous position, but she knew it was of no use to say so, and tried to fix her attention on the distant sky against which they hoped to see their little favourite appear. The silence was broken by a man's voice that came from the wood.

"I've been a studying of you, Master Edward," cried this new-comer, "for these ten minutes and more, and it beats me to think what you are looking out for."

"Why, Peter!" replied Edward, in a loud voice, "have you been stationed on that stump all this time?"

Yes, I'm waiting for the Captain. Isn't he coming home?"

"Tell him, Margaret," cried Edward, "I cannot watch and shout too."

Margaret, therefore, asked Peter to come nearer, and to sit down on one of the chairs on the lawn, but he was too polite for that; he chose to stand while the young lady talked to him. She told him that her papa went to Scotland last week to settle with Sir Hugh Armstrong at Aberdeen, about the time when the "Pole-Star" was to sail, and whether he was to take the command, and that he was expected back in London to-day, and her mamma was gone to meet him, and most likely they would both be home by the train at eight o'clock.

"And when is he expecting to sail, Miss Margaret?"

"You know, Peter, it is not quite certain that he will go at all."

"I don't make no manner of doubt about that, Miss Margaret," replied Peter. "If Sir Hugh Armstrong gets the choice of such a captain as he is to sail his ship, he won't refuse, you may be sure."

"We are afraid so, Peter," said Margaret, with a sigh; "but we do not know how soon the ship will be ready yet."

"It's a strange thing now," said Peter,—*"a very strange thing, that a gentleman like him will leave a pretty place such as this is, all complete and like a jewel-case, as I may say, to run into danger and hardship; but he can never forget Sir John Franklin. One would think it had been enough to go once himself and send his nephew, that's almost as good as his son, seeing he's lived with him nearly all his life, besides. There's no news yet of Mr. John, is there, Miss?"*

"No, we cannot expect to hear now till the end of the summer or autumn. We hoped he would have come home last autumn."

"It was full time he did. Let me see. Lieutenant Armstrong sailed in the 'Investigator,' Captain Maclure, as consort to the 'Enterprise,' Captain Collinson, in 1850, by Behring's Straits, and this is 1853. Three winters in the ice! Very true, *we* was four, but then every one mayn't have our luck;" and Peter shook his head and looked very dismal.

"Then you think it is very dangerous, Peter?"

"Why, as to that, Miss, when you get among the ice you're in danger at every turn—if there's a wind blowing, that is; and even if it's calm, there's tides and currents, no

end o' them. Suppose, now, you was out in a carriage, or a shay now, and met the church coming bearing down on you, steeple and all, and couldn't get out of its way, or if you did, you went smash against that flat grass field that had weighed anchor, and was coming full sail aboard of you: and as to the church compared to an iceberg, it's a mere pigmy, for they're two and three hundred feet above the water, and twice as much below; and as to the floes—as they call the flat fields of ice—why, they're miles long sometimes. And then what's one church, or one iceberg? I've seen a hundred at once round us."

This was rather poor comfort to Margaret, whose heart was full of fears for her father and for her cousin; but she tried to take courage, and thought of the strength of a ship in comparison with a carriage.

"But the ships are built strong enough to stand the shocks," she said.

"That's true, Miss. They would be in a critical point else. Our ship was nipped again and again, and rose like a duck on the ice instead of being stoved in."

"Nipped! What is that?"

"Pinched between two floes or great pieces of ice. You're to suppose—don't you see—that you're sailing by a long flat field of ice that's fixed. Then comes another driving before the wind, or on some current, right down upon you; that's the idea of it."

"It's very dreadful!"

"You *may* be smashed and go to the bottom, ship and all, or you may slip up high and dry on the ice like a duck, as I said before, and the ice close under you."

"And is that what your ship did?"

"Yes, many times; and when the ice closes, there's a

smash! Crash it goes, thundering and snapping, and the sea boiling up between the broken pieces, and great tables of ice starting up edgeways and falling again and toppling over, and then again rising in ridges of hummocks, as they're called. You may think how the ship bumps about in the middle of it. I've seen us all thrown down heels over-head about the decks, and twelve kittles at once jump off the galley-fire."

Margaret began to laugh in spite of the dreadful stories Peter was telling her.

"If it warn't for my old woman at home I would have another spell of it myself," added Peter. "And who knows but what I may yet? I just want to have one more talk with the Captain about it."

Margaret looked very much surprised and puzzled at this conclusion to Peter's stories. It was not at all what she had expected.

"But what is Master Edward about up there?" he asked, after a short pause.

"Watching for our carrier-pigeon. We have trained him for months to bring home notes to us under his wing, that papa may take him on his voyage and send him back to us. Perhaps he would come and bring us a message when we were longing for one very much."

Peter gave a sort of grunt, and looked very doubtful indeed; then asked how far the bird had to come this evening?

Margaret replied that her papa took him to Aberdeen when he went, and that her Aunt Mary was to send him off from there this morning, and that they reckoned, as he would fly, it would not be much over four hundred miles.

"Four hundred miles!" said Peter; "that's a long way off three thousand."

"I know that; but it is so wonderful that a little bird can find its way four hundred miles, that, if he does, we may hope he will find it three thousand. Besides, we have read about Captain Ross's pigeon."

"Did Captain Ross send one?"

"He did send one from his winter quarters, and it reached its home near Ayr, in Scotland, in five days."

"Now let me see," said Peter, who always liked to be accurate: "Captain Ross—he warn't Sir John when I sailed with him, you know, Miss—Captain Ross sent no pigeons when I was aboard of him in the 'Victory,' nor yet after we left our ship and took up our quarters at the beach; and I never heard tell of his sending one when he went his first voyage in 1818, in the 'Isabella.'"

"You've told him wrong, Margaret!" cried Edward, to whom the wind had carried the last part of the conversation. "It was Sir James, not Sir John Ross."

"Oh, it was Captain James, was it?" said Peter, looking more interested in the story. "He warn't Sir James when he was in the 'Victory' with us, nor Captain neither; he was Commander James Ross, that was his title, and he was second in command to his uncle, the old gentleman; only we always called him Captain James, and sometimes Captain Jemmy."

"Well, Peter, will you let me go on? Sir James Ross sent a pigeon from his winter quarters on Leopold Island in 1848."

"And it reached its home, Miss Margaret?"

"Yes, in five days; but it had lost its note from under its wing."

Peter looked very grave, and sat for some time with his head to one side, sometimes muttering a few words to himself, sometimes giving short grunts, which might mean either doubt or approval; but he ended by saying that if they really thought of trying it, he could make a house or cage of the very best kind for the bird to live in; and that if they would come down to his shop in the morning, he would knock up a sort of model for them, to show what he meant.

Meanwhile Margaret walked up and down, often looking up at Edward, who only shook his head in reply to her inquiring face.

"But the bird don't come back, you see, even this short journey, Miss," observed Peter. "Is this his first journey?"

"Oh, no! We had him carried only ten miles off the first time, and he was back in his nest in ten minutes after they let him fly. Then we—— Oh, Edward, Edward, you will kill yourself!"

This cry was caused by Edward having let himself drop from the pointed pinnacle where he had been stationed, and come scrambling down to the stable-roof, catching and clinging to pointed bricks and ends of beams. He was now on his way to the pigeon-house on hands and knees, and quickly appeared with Sir Launcelot in one hand, while he waved his cap in triumph with the other. Margaret uttered a cry of joy at the sight.

"Did you see him coming?"

"Only when he was quite close. He seemed to fall from the sky. Run in for some peas and some water as fast as you can."

"Come down with him then, by the time I come back, that I may kiss the little pet. Come along, Trident!" she

cried, and he bounded off with her towards the kitchen door. Edward was on the terrace, fondling his favourite, when she returned. Her first care, after the kiss, was to hold a bowl of water to its beak. The tired bird drank long, as if very thirsty, and then began to pick up the peas as fast as possible. He was so tame that when he had finished he nestled in Margaret's hand, ruffling his feathers, and making a little cooing sound; and she and Edward, sitting side by side at the root of a birch-tree, seemed as if they could not caress him enough. Trident stood by with his mouth open and his red tongue hanging out, looking gravely and inquiringly first in their faces and then at the bird, as if he had some idea of what it all meant, but wished to know more.

"But his despatches! We forget them all this time!" cried Edward. "Come, postman, where's the letter?" and he raised the pigeon's wing while Margaret held him with both hands. Under it was a little note fastened to a silk cord.

"All safe, you see! Read it, Edward!" said Margaret

*"Latest date, Aberdeen, half-past eight A.M.
May 8th, 1853.*

"Your father left us last night for Edinburgh, and hopes to be home about the same time with your little messenger. It is quite decided that he takes the command of the 'Pole-Star,' which sails from our harbour in a week at farthest. He will, therefore, soon return to us, soon to leave us again. I shall think of you, my dear Edward and Margaret, in the approaching parting, and give my love to your dear mother, and tell her she knows how constantly I think of her.

"Sir Hugh has no faith in our poor little pigeon, but he sends his love. Your affectionate Aunt,

"MARY ARMSTRONG."

Both sat for some time without speaking; Edward's face flushed; Margaret's lip quivered, and she could with difficulty restrain her tears. It was Peter who broke the silence.

"It's a wonderful thing now," said he—"a real wonderful thing, how this bird can have found his way. It's not as if he had e'er a compass to guide him, or understood the motion of the sun, like a Christian, or could say to himself, as he looked down on the earth, 'that's such a town or such a county' even, as if he'd learned geography. I've heard tell of such things afore, but I never see it afore. It beats me!"

"But, Peter," said Edward, "you must have seen, when you were with Captain Ross, the birds of passage, the geese and eider ducks, and all the rest of them, flying southward in great flocks as winter came on, and returning northwards in spring. They fly thousands of miles with no guide but their instinct—at least, that is what we call it."

"Why, yes, Master Edward, that's true," said Peter, "I can't gainsay it; but some way it seems different to me, their flying in great flocks to their winter quarters, and their summer breeding-grounds. First and foremost, they're in flocks, and for all we know, the old ones teach the young ones."

"But they are not always in flocks. A solitary petrel is often seen steadily going his way. There is a pretty little poem of Mary Howitt's, called 'The Stormy Petrel,' that I will show you, Peter; and if they are in flocks, and

if they should tell one another, it's no easier to understand. How do they manage to keep on, right straight on? How do they know that their flight is exactly directed to the right spot?"

"I say again, it beats me," answered Peter.

"Say that other poem to us, Margaret, will you?" Edward added; "that poem of Bryant's that we all liked so much—'The Water-Fowl' it was called. Now, Peter, sit down and listen if you don't think it beautiful too."

So Peter sat down and listened all attention, while Margaret, taking hold of her brother's hand a little nervously with both hers, and keeping Sir Launcelot nestled in her lap, said the poem with great feeling:—

"Whither, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?"

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power, whose care
Teaches the way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold thin atmosphere;
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end,
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest
And scream among thy fellows ; reeds shall bend
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone ; the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He, who, from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright."

"It sounds like a message to us, Henry," said a gentle voice behind the group.

Peter rose in a moment, touching his cap ; and Edward and Margaret, turning round, saw their father and mother behind them. They started up, and, as they did so, the pigeon flew to his nest on the stable-roof.

Mrs. Armstrong was very pale, but she looked quite calm. She leaned on her husband's arm, her hand in his ; and his handsome, sunburnt face, to which the excitement of his approaching work gave an animated expression, was a strong contrast to her small, delicate features, and the melancholy expression of her eyes. Margaret clasped the arm on which her mother's lay, and hid her face on it ; while Edward seized his father's disengaged hand, and said, eagerly, "All I ask is, take me with you. Think once more, before you refuse me."

"Come in, my dear children," said Captain Armstrong. "We will talk over this presently."

"Then I may hope ?"

"I have said we will talk this over presently. My mind is quite made up ; and when we have had time to go

over all that I have to say, you will understand me. Now let us go in."

They obeyed, walking slowly and silently along the terrace. Peter had already left the place, his native good feeling having taught him that the family ought not to be intruded upon at this moment.

CHAPTER II.

AN EVENING AT HOME.

THE pretty drawing-room into which they stepped from the terrace did indeed justify Peter's wonder that the possessor of such a "jewel-case" should like to leave it to brave danger and hardship. You hardly knew whether to keep your eyes on the comfort and beauty within, or to look out at the lovely views from the window, through which the delicious scent of the pines and birches, after the rain, came in. But to leave all this was not much trial to Captain Armstrong. His real trial was to leave his wife and children again. Many a time had he left them, and again and again had come back safely to them; and now he had intended to settle at home for life, and to devote himself to the scientific pursuits in which he took delight, and to his son's education. There, opening out of the drawing-room, was his study, with his books and writing-table, his telescopes and microscopes, and Edward's table by it; and in a window Edward's easel, for he was passionately fond of drawing; and in the drawing-room were musical instruments, and books, and pictures. You could see that his family, having such tastes, and such a home,

with so beautiful a country around it, were thoroughly contented with their lot, and wished for nothing better.

But yet the father of this family was going far away on a perilous voyage, and a voyage in which there could not be much hope to cheer him; for he was going on the search for Sir John Franklin, and it was eight years since he had been heard of. It was now the year 1853, and Franklin's last despatches from Baffin's Bay were dated July 12, 1845; and his first winter quarters on Beechey Island, in the discovery of which Captain Armstrong had assisted, were the only traces of him since.

England, however, had never lost hope, notwithstanding the want of success that had attended the numerous and well-appointed expeditions already sent out. The strong interest excited for the two missing ships, and their commanders and crews of one hundred and forty men, had not cooled, and was strengthened by the deep sympathy with Lady Franklin which her never-failing exertions and strong and faithful feeling drew forth. She had, at this period, just sent out her little ship the "Prince Albert" again, and was again waiting in anxious suspense for the result. Captain Armstrong was among those who had the deepest interest for her, and for the many sorrowing, anxious hearts besides, that had waited and hoped so long in vain. He had, therefore, volunteered on one of the Arctic expeditions in 1850, had encouraged his nephew, John Armstrong, a lieutenant in the navy, to go out in the "Investigator" in the same year, and was now ready to start again. The ship which Captain Armstrong was to command belonged to his near relation, Sir Hugh Armstrong, a rich merchant, who had refitted and manned her entirely at his own expense. She was built at Aberdeen for a whaler, and was

now further strengthened, and had received on board all the stores necessary for the service for which she was destined, and provisions for two years. Sir Hugh had personally known Sir John Franklin, as well as two or three of his officers, and was enthusiastic in the cause of finding them ; so that when Captain Armstrong voluntarily offered to command the "Pole-Star" (so his new ship was christened), he joyfully accepted the offer, knowing that no man was better fitted for the task, from his long experience and well-known energy and promptitude. The route to be followed Sir Hugh had trusted to *himself*, and he had no hesitation about which to choose. He had a strong feeling that one especial region had been neglected, and ought to be explored.

Our party was assembled after tea in the library. On the table, charts and maps of the Arctic regions were spread, and Captain Armstrong was to show them his intended route and his reasons for taking it.

"You must first find and observe well," said he, "the last place to which we have traced Franklin—his winter-quarters in the winter of 1845 to 1846."

"Here it is," said Edward—"Beechey Island and Cape Riley."

"There he was, you see, at the entrance of Regent's Inlet to the south, Barrow Strait and Melville Sound to the west, and Wellington Channel to the north. The question is, as he left no word to guide us, which route he took in search of his object—the discovery of the north-west passage to the Pacific Ocean."

Mrs. Armstrong sighed. "It is sad to think," said she, "how little the discovery will be worth when it is made—if, indeed, it ever is made—an ice-encumbered passage through a stormy sea."

"Ah! but then it is so hateful to be baffled," cried Edward: "it would never do to give it up."

"But," said Captain Armstrong, "we have given up any idea of its being of use long ago, except as a matter of knowledge. When the search began, the Portuguese and Spaniards were stronger on the seas than England, and treated as pirates all English ships which sailed on any of the seas over which they had power. As Columbus had discovered America, and Vasco de Gama had found the route to India by the Cape of Good Hope, it was natural that England should try to get at these great regions somehow. So, as they could not be reached by the south without fighting (which, however, our forefathers were not slow to do), they tried for a quicker way by the north, which should be all their own."

"You promised me, papa," said Margaret, going to the back of his chair and putting her arms round his neck, "that you would teach me all about that, and you never have."

"Did I, my little girl? Well, then, I am sure I ought to keep my word."

"Margaret will not let me teach her the history of Arctic adventure," said Mrs. Armstrong, smiling; "she always says, 'Papa is going to do that.'"

"I've often heard you talk about it in little bits, you know, papa; but I want to know how it all was."

"And I should like, my little girl, to know how much the 'mariners of England' have added to our knowledge of the earth. There can be no knowledge much more interesting to us than the truth concerning the world our Creator has given us for a dwelling-place. You are very fond of geography, I know, Maggie."

"Yes, I like it the best of all my lessons, papa."

"Well, then, the search for this passage by the north, from England to the Pacific Ocean, has been one great means of making us accurate geographers. Come round, and sit close by me, where you can see the map well, and I will show you what people believed when the search began."

"You have taught Edward, haven't you, papa?"

"Yes, Edward understands it pretty well, and now you shall also. Look in the map, and find one of the large Russian rivers towards the eastern frontier of Europe."

"Here is the river Obi."

"That will do. Well, it was in Queen Elizabeth's time, about three hundred years ago, that Sir Hugh Willoughby was sent with three little ships, with orders to coast the north of Europe and ascend some large Russian river to its source, and so reach Cathay, by which they meant China."

"Why, then, they knew nothing of all this immense continent of Asia, papa. They thought China was at the east side of Europe."

"Yes, and poor Sir Hugh Willoughby did not make them any wiser. He never came home again; and some Russian sailors found his three ships some years afterwards imbedded in ice, with all their crews in them frozen to death."

"That was very dreadful."

"Soon afterwards, in 1567, Martin Frobisher set off to the westward, to undertake, as they said then, 'the only great thing left undone in the world,' the discovery of the north-west passage to India."

"How many great things that they never dreamed of have been done in the world since!" said Mrs. Armstrong; "and the north-west passage is not found yet!"

"Yes, how true that is ! and so it constantly is ! Men set about striving for one thing with all their energy and cannot find it, but find some other thing, perhaps much more important."

"And that is encouragement to us all to work and not to be idle, for if we fail in what we strive to do we may yet do something."

"And what did Martin Frobisher do ?" asked Margaret.

"He sailed across the Atlantic, and nearly reached Hudson's Bay."

"Look, Margaret," said Edward, "this was where he got to—'Frobisher's Strait,' it is called after him."

"When he got there he thought the land on one side was America and on the other Asia, and that he had nearly reached India."

"Then he knew nothing of all this northern part of America," said Margaret, "stretching out all this long way. People thought the world was a very little place to what it really is. I remember that Columbus believed he had come to the east coast of Asia when he discovered America."

"Yes, he did, and it was quite natural. It was not till twenty years afterwards that Balboa saw the great Pacific Ocean from a mountain in the Isthmus of Darien, and made his way down to its shores, and watched to see if it had tides and was indeed an ocean like the Atlantic, and tasted its waters to find out if they were salt."

"Mamma read about that to me, papa, and how he waded in with his drawn sword and took possession of the ocean in the name of his master the King of Spain."

"The great ocean cared little for that," said Edward.

"Balboa had done exactly what your mamma observed as so often happening. He had made a grand discovery,

though he utterly failed in making the King of Spain lord and master of the Pacific Ocean. In ten years more Magellan sailed round the world, going westward by Cape Horn, and the Portuguese had long before doubled the Cape of Good Hope."

"They knew much more about the world to the south than to the north," said Edward. "I cannot think what form they imagined it was of."

"They were in entire confusion about it. When one of those Spanish discoverers first crossed the equator and lost sight of the polar star, the sailors were in great alarm, and believed that some vast height hid it from their view. They had no idea that the earth was a globe, and that they had passed so far south on its surface as to have got into its southern hemisphere, or 'half-globe,' which is the meaning of that long word."

"And who went after Martin Frobisher?" asked Margaret.

"A number of hardy, adventurous men sailed with various fate to the north-west, the greater number never to return; but the most important discoveries were made by Davis, Hudson, and Baffin. The last sailed in 1616."

"Look, Margaret," said Edward; "you see on the map Hudson's Bay, Davis' Straits, and Baffin's Bay: they are named after the men who discovered them. See what great lines of coast and large seas they explored!"

"But though Baffin sailed round this great bay, he did not find out any of these sounds leading to the north and west," said Captain Armstrong. "He, like everybody else, thought that he was near Asia, and the western shore was named 'Hope Checked,' because it seemed to close him in, where he expected to find Japan."

"But when we come to Captain Cook's voyages we find much more sense about it, father," said Edward. "He knew better than to fancy Japan was opposite to Greenland."

"Oh, yes; his voyages were made towards the end of the eighteenth century, and by that time great advances had been made in knowledge. Our hardy sailors had found it easier to conquer their enemies than to make their way through the ice. England was fast becoming the greatest naval power in the world; her ships could sail everywhere, and a northern passage was no longer sought for the purposes of commerce, only for the sake of finding out the truth. Captain Cook sailed through Behring's Straits, but he made no progress in the Arctic seas. He turned back at the first sight of the ice. Still, no one after his time could be ignorant of the great distance that really exists between Behring's Strait and Baffin's Bay, though whether it was land or ocean, ice or water, no one knew."

"Horatio Nelson went on an Arctic voyage when he was a boy," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"It was in 1773," said Edward; "I remember that; as coxswain of the 'Carcase,' under Captain Phipps, but they were turned back by the ice to the north of Spitzbergen."

"And who tried after Captain Cook?" asked Margaret.

"The next attempt of any importance," replied her father, "was made by Captain Ross in 1818, with the 'Isabella and Alexander.' He, however, only coasted the shores of Baffin's Bay, took it for granted, like Baffin himself, that Smith's and Jones' Sounds were enclosed by land, and, after sailing a little way up Lancaster Sound, imagined he saw a ridge of mountains stretching across the passage, so he turned back and came home."

"Now then we come to Parry!" cried Edward, settling

himself at the table with the chart of the Arctic seas before him.

"Yes, now we come to Parry. He was second in command to Captain Ross the year before, and was sent out in 1819 to ascertain the truth as to the mountains in Lancaster Sound. He sailed in the 'Hecla,' with the 'Griper' as consort. This is his course. He crossed the ice of Baffin's Bay and entered Lancaster Sound. The mountains had melted into air. He sailed through a broad channel free of ice for sixty miles. He was soon beyond the range of any former navigator. Then began great excitement on board. The mast-heads were crowded by the officers. There were constant reports from the crow's nest."

"You know what that is, Margaret?" asked Edward.

"A round-shaped house like a tub at the mast-head for the look-out man," answered she.

Edward nodded approvingly.

"They explored and named Regent's Channel to the south, but were stopped by ice, and returned to the main channel. They reached 86° west longitude, 'Land ahead!' shouted the look-out man."

"What a pity!" sighed Margaret.

"It proved to be only an island."

"I am so glad of that!"

"This island they named after Prince Leopold, now King of Belgium. It had high mountains and most remarkable cliffs, like columns, which is indeed the form of many of the rocks thereabouts. Flocks of sea-birds, flying eastward, passed overhead; this they took as a sign of open sea to westward. Narwhales, seals, and whales, crowded the waters. Englishmen were invading their world for the first time."

"What are narwhales?" asked Margaret.

"A small kind of whale, with one tooth so much longer than the other—for narwhales have only two teeth—that it stands out like a horn, and so sailors often call it the unicorn fish. Now I must tell you about the compass. You know what the mariner's compass is?"

"Yes, you showed me the compass in your ship, and there is one under my globe. The needle always points to the north."

"But the needle in Parry's compass, when he reached 89°, no longer pointed to the north. It only pointed to the iron in his ship, and was therefore of no use to steer his course by."

"He was within 8° of the magnetic pole, that was the reason," said Edward. Margaret shook her head at him and looked reproachful.

"I know, I know, Maggie; I promised to tell you all about that, but I will, really, to-morrow—at least, all I know myself," Edward added, more humbly, encountering a look of amused inquiry in his father's eye.

"Well, then, what did Parry do without his compass?" asked Margaret.

"He sailed still westward with land on either hand, sometimes through a thick fog, without sight of sun or star, so that with no compass he could only trust to the steady east wind and to careful sounding. You know what I mean by sounding?"

"Yes, papa; throwing a piece of lead fastened to a line down into the sea to try how deep it is, and if it is safe for the ship to sail without fear of rocks or sands, or getting too near the shore."

"Quite right, Maggie. Perhaps no one had ever sailed

so since very old times when sailors had first begun to venture on unknown waters. He named the land that lay on his right North Devon, and that on his left North Somerset ; then discovered and named Wellington Channel. Soon afterwards he was stopped by ice, but it was found to be loose, and he bored through."

"What does 'he bored through' mean?" asked Margaret.

"Boring means forcing a ship through ice under a press of sail. It can only be done when the ice is much broken."

"He landed on and named Byam Martin Island. Here there were ruins of Esquimaux huts, and traces of reindeer and musk-oxen. When he reached 110° west, Parry announced to his crews that they had become entitled to the king's bounty of five thousand pounds, the first in the scale of rewards promised to success in westward progress. Then he passed and named Melville Island, but he could only go a very little farther ; the ice was fast gathering, it was September, and winter had already set in. He was obliged to turn back and get into harbour on the south-east side of Melville Island."

"Here it is, Winter Harbour," said Margaret, pointing to the chart.

"The ice had gathered so fast round the coast that they had to cut a lane through it of nearly two miles in length, through which they dragged the ships to get them into safety. The men were in high spirits through the winter, and hoped to get out in spring, go on westward, and spend the next winter in the South Sea Islands. The decks were housed over with canvas, and the ships made into warm habitations. They observed regular order and duty, but

had plenty of amusement. They acted plays, got up a newspaper, had games and exercises. They also explored the island in spring, and discovered these islands to the north, making correct charts of all."

"I recollect," said Edward, "Parry tells what good spirits the men had, and describes how, when they had to drag a cart loaded with fuel and provisions, on one of the exploring parties, they set a blanket on it for a sail when the wind was favourable, and another for a mainsail when it got on the larboard quarter."

"He kept them in excellent health and spirits in winter, but his hopes for spring were disappointed. He could not get his ships out till August, then he steered for the west, but he only reached 112°. There he found the sea choked with ice of immense thickness. The floes—I mean the flat fields of ice—were from forty to fifty feet thick. His ships received such shocks that he dared not venture farther. He was obliged to turn back, and he reached England in November, 1820."

"How I wish he could have got on farther!" said Margaret.

"But you see what an extent of sea he had sailed through, and how much he had added to our knowledge in that one voyage," said Captain Armstrong; and as he said so he again traced Parry's course on the chart.

"He made a second voyage in 1821, in the 'Hecla,' with the 'Fury,' commanded by Captain Lyon, the purpose this time being to seek a north-west passage farther south. It was supposed that Regent's Inlet might communicate with Hudson's Bay. Parry therefore sailed to Hudson's Bay, reached its northern shores, and minutely examined all the region you can trace on the chart in this direction,"

said Captain Armstrong, pointing to the place. "Southampton Island, Repulse Bay, and Frozen Strait, wintering on the south of Melville Peninsula: but he was not the discoverer [of the greater part of this portion of the Arctic seas. They had been explored by Captain Middleton seventy-nine years before. Parry and Lyon met with a very interesting tribe of Esquimaux on this occasion, from whom they got information of the coast that they found to be correct. Wherever discoverers have gone they have found, thinly scattered on the shores of the Arctic seas, tribes of that peculiar race we call Esquimaux, but who call themselves Innuit."

"Are they good, gentle people, papa?"

"Generally. If they are met with in large numbers they are apt to be noisy and turbulent, and they are nearly all thieves. But then we must remember that a ship contains on every side objects that are more precious to them than gold to us, I mean wood and iron."

"And how do they live in those cold countries?"

"They are bold and expert hunters of seal, walrus, and bears; but they have no foresight, and spend their time between want and over-abundance. On the whole, they are wonderfully cheerful, even merry."

"Then Parry made friends with that tribe, papa, I suppose. And did he and Captain Lyon stay out there two winters?"

"They remained out there two winters, but on the third summer were obliged to return without success, finding no passage."

"You must now," he continued, "in order to see what has been done since that time, look at this northern coast of America, bordered by the Arctic Sea, from Melville

Peninsula to Point Barrow. The greater part of this long line of coast has been explored. Sir John Franklin, together with Richardson, Bach, and a party of men, who all deserve the name of heroes for their courageous endurance of hardships and sufferings, explored the coast eastwards from the Coppermine River for five hundred and fifty miles; they were obliged to give it up at that point, after losing several of their number from famine. Franklin, notwithstanding, volunteered in 1825 to conduct another expedition to these shores."

"It was like his hopefulness and energy to do so," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"It was, and he was nobly seconded. Bach and Richardson went with him again. They took much larger provisions this time, and had great success. They travelled through North America to the Mackenzie River, which they traced to the sea, and wintered at Fort Franklin, on the shores of Bear Lake."

"I have found the place," said Edward, showing it to Margaret.

"Early in the summer they divided, and in parties of two boats each, started in different directions. On the 21st of September the two parties met again at Fort Franklin in health and safety, the western party having explored the coast for two thousand and forty-eight miles, the eastern for one thousand nine hundred and eighty. Dease and Simpson, two officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, which is a company trading in furs, have farther carried on this work. We now want only that portion towards Behring's Strait, which we may hope the expedition in which John went out may succeed in surveying."

"There is still a part here in the map, papa, that you

have not told us about," said Margaret; "I mean Boothia and King William's Land."

"This region was partly discovered by Captain Lyon in 1824, partly by Parry in his third voyage, and partly by Ross," said Captain Armstrong.

"It was in that voyage of Parry's, in 1824, that the 'Fury' was wrecked off the shore of North Somerset, I think, father," said Edward. "Peter Greely tells many a story about her stores."

"Oh, yes; when Parry found that the 'Fury' was really a wreck, and that her crew must come on board the 'Hecla,' he ordered all her stores, that he had no room for, to be landed, and left for the use of any future expedition, or for the Esquimaux if they came that way."

"By the by, I am sorry to interrupt you," said Mrs. Armstrong, "but Peter has been waiting in the kitchen for a long time to see you. He has something particular to ask you, he says. I therefore told him to sit down till you could attend to him."

"May we call him in?" said Edward. "Do ask him to tell us some of his adventures with Captain Ross."

"If we do," said Captain Armstrong, "and Peter begins some of his stories, we shall not have much more time to go on with our maps; but I can finish what I am telling my little Maggie to-morrow evening, so call him in if you like."

"He is so amusing," said Edward, jumping up to go for him.

"I think, too, I should like to ask him as to the amount of game, or animal life of any kind, in Boothia; so bring him in."

CHAPTER III.

AN OLD SAILOR'S RECOLLECTIONS.

PETER was soon in the room, and having made his bow, stood by the door, cap in hand.

"Well, Greely, what do you want to say to me?" asked Captain Armstrong.

"Why, I've been thinking, as I hear you're soon to be afloat again, that I should like to go aboard of you, Captain, in the 'Pole-Star,' and try my luck among the ice again."

"I won't take you, Peter. You don't know when you're well off. What would you have? You have a good wife, a comfortable cottage, and the best business of the village as a carpenter. It is quite enough to have been out five years as you were."

"Four years and four months, short o' five days, Captain. We weighed anchor in the 'Victory,' off Woolwich, the 23rd of May, A.D. 1829, and reached the Humber aboard the 'Isabella' of Hull, the 18th of September, 1833."

"It was quite long enough, at all events, Peter. I know there is not a better ship's carpenter than you. It is not that I should not like to have you, but I am too much your friend to unsettle you. Now I want you to tell me what you found good to eat in Boothia. Was there much game?"

"Plenty o' bears."

"And they are good eating when a man is hungry?"

"As to that I won't say, but it would never do to eat 'em. They make men mad."

"What story is that you have got up?"

"It's true—so they tell me. The men as eat them all go mad; or if they don't, they die when they get home."

"Did you ever try?"

"Oh, yes; I ate bits o' them myself many times when we were on short allowance, and that was wonderful often."

"And you did not go mad or die?"

"I an't mad nor dead yet."

"Then you did hunt the bears?"

"Oh, yes, we did. Captain James was an excellent shot, and he killed a good many, but he got into a critical point once. He was out by himself, and four bears all came prowling round at once. He didn't shoot that time. He said to the bears, 'You let alone and I'll let alone,' and cut away as hard as he could."

"But had you no birds there?"

"Plenty of dovekeys. They're natives of Ireland, and come first. They're signs of open water. We shot them often, and they're good eating. One day I was out with Captain James (we always called him Captain James, though he warn't captain then), and he shot a dovekey, and it fell in a pool. So I got on a piece of floating ice, and paddled out on it with a boat-hook, and raked the bird on the ice with it. They were flying all round my feet, hundreds of 'em. So Captain James says, 'Now, don't budge! Stop where you are, and collect my birds.' So he shot numbers, and never hit me; and I brought 'em all safe ashore on my ice. It was a critical point to land 'em, for pieces of ice like that is apt to turn the turtle with you when you go to get off 'em. I tell you, to show you what a good shot he was."

"But had you no other birds?"

"We'd grouse."

"Ptarmigan, I suppose?"

"Yes; they were mostly white and grey, and they mostly went for the sick. I once had a strange game out shooting. It was our second summer, and the ice was

giving way, and we was watching it for signs that we could get out. We could have got out, bless you! They didn't want to get out—that was it—not the first season, that is; they wanted to make more discoveries. I don't mean to say they wouldn't have got out if they could the next year. So says I to Barny Wood, one of our seamen, 'Barny,' says I, 'come and we'll have a pull before we start.' I only shot one grouse. Presently we heard, 'Come aboard!' It was just like their speaking-trumpets—and you hear a wonderful way across the ice. Barny says, 'The ship's a sailin' out.' 'No,' I says, 'they'll uot go without us, or they'll send a boat back for us.' 'Come aboard!' again. I looked about me, and saw a large bird, and soon saw it was him as made the noise. I shot him, and he was beautiful eating, and weighed nine pounds. He was an Arctic hawk."

"You must have had other birds?"

"Yes—gulls and kittiewakes; and fish we had."

"What fish?"

"Salmon. We caught an immense shoal in our nets."

"What! of salmon?"

"Salmon trout, they were. We dried numbers, and numbers we spoiled with vardegris."

"Why, how did you manage that?"

"Boiling 'em with vinegar in the copper kittles, by way of pickling them."

"After all, then, it was the 'Fury's' stores that Parry left on the beach that supported you all those five—I mean four—years."

"So it was, and we had short allowance, too, I can tell ye, for all the canisters o' preserved meat and all the barrels o' flour we got hold on. I fared among the best. I used often to have sawdust pudden."

"Not very nourishing, I should think," said Edward, laughing.

"There I beg your pardon, Master Edward. I had the job of sawing the frozen meat when the canisters was broke open, and very good puddens the sawdust made, mixed with a little flour."

All agreed that such sawdust would be very good indeed.

"Yes, it was better than our soup—pea-soup—a pint of peas to a gallon of water, three parts fresh, one part salt, to flavour it. Fox is good eating. We often killed foxes."

"Did you never kill seals? You had plenty of them, surely."

"Oh, yes, plenty o' seals. We used to see them on the ice, each close to his hole. They always keeps near their holes, and down they pops at the least alarm. We could not shoot many. We should just have starved without the stores. We helped ourselves to them at the first arrival. There they were—piled-up barrels of meat, barrels of flour, tin canisters, no end o' them. They were our mainstay the two first years. Then our third summer, when we abandoned the ship, despairing of ever getting her out of the ice, we went forward with our sledges to get to Fury Beach. That was the name they gave to the part of the coast where the stores lay."

"You left the 'Victory' farther south?"

"Yes, we bid our good-bye to the poor old 'Victory' the 29th of May, 1832. We had landed and secured all the stores we could not carry forward as well as we could. I know where my tool-chest lays now. Then we nailed the colours to the mast, and left her. So Captain James said he'd go with a flying party, to see if the stores was safe still; 'For,' says he, 'if not, we needn't go on, but

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may just as well shoot one another.’ So he went, and he told us he’d come back to meet us, and, if it was all right, we should see the flag flying. So, the second day, we see him coming. No flag! We all stopped a dead stop. ‘It’s no go,’ says one. ‘I won’t pull no longer,’ says another. ‘What’s the use on’t?’ says a third. ‘Come on—let’s meet him, any way,’ says a fourth. While we were all standing, up goes the flag! We pulled a good ‘un, you may be sure, then; and he’d brought some lime-juice, and some of the bread and meat canisters back. We got on fast after that.”

“How long did it take you to make this journey with your loaded sledges?”

“We reached Fury Beach on the 1st of July, and a good supper we had that night off the stores that was lying scattered about. It was a heavy journey for half-starved men, dragging loaded sledges and boats; for we dragged our boats the biggest part of the way, and left them within reach, in case we found the ‘Fury’s’ boats was gone.”

“You were in a dreadful situation, Peter, without a ship, in that dreary place, nearly three thousand miles from home?”

“We *were* in a critical point. All we had for it was to get in our boats to Ballin’s Bay, to the track of the whalers, in hopes of being picked up; that was the idea of it.”

“The distance is between two and three hundred miles, I think.”

“Yes, about that.”

“You had not been forgotten in England, you know. Commander Bach had volunteered to go to your rescue in 1833.”

"So we heard afterwards, but we did not know it then."

"You made your escape in the 'Fury's' boats, I think?"

"Yes, we did. The 'Fury' herself was clean gone—not a trace of her left."

"But you did not make your escape that year?"

"No, no—we were baffled in that. The ice opened by the 1st of August, so as to let us put off in the boats, and we beat our way along the coast to the north-eastern point of North Somerset, as it is named; but there was nothing to be seen but solid ice in the direction of Barrow's Strait. It never opened, and we had to go back to the beach."

"What a pity it seems to go back again!" said Edward.

"There was nothing else for it but starvation," said Peter. "What birds or animals there was there had gone south for the winter. We suffered enough while we waited. We didn't take the boats back all the way; we left them at Batty Bay. You'll see, on the map, that's half way, if you look."

"Then, when you got back to Fury Beach, you built a canvas house?" said Edward.

"No, we had made it before, but we wintered in it. Somerset House we called it. We found a fox had taken up his abode in it, but he soon cut off."

"It must have been very cold in a canvas house," said Margaret.

"No, miss; because, don't you understand, it got coated with snow; and we piled the snow up the walls—that was the idea of it. And then we had plenty of coals: the beach was lined with the coals left by the 'Fury.' We had

a good stove in the middle, red-hot ; and there we cooked, and we slept in bunks—Captain Ross, Captain James, and the doctor and purser at one end, and, at first, all of us on the ground, with our feet to the stove ; afterwards we had bunks too.”

“ I dare say you made yourselves tolerably comfortable,” said Captain Armstrong, “ especially after your sufferings and hardships in the attempt to escape. You must have had a great deal to endure then.”

“ Most from cold, more even than hunger, I think ; and Somerset House seemed like home to us.”

“ I want to hear all the story of your escape next season, Greely,” said Captain Armstrong. “ Come and sit down, and give it to us. There is a very meagre account published.”

Peter took the chair Edward handed to him, willingly. There was nothing he liked better than to talk over his old adventures.

“ I shall recollect all about that,” he began, “ as long as I live. You see we had left the boats, as I said, at Batty Bay the year before.”

“ We have now got to the spring of 1833, then ?” said Edward.

“ Yes. Well, now, we had to make journeys all through May and June, to carry forward provisions and stores to the boats on sledges, you understand. We left them, and returned for more. At night we pitched a tent, and slept under it ; then went on again. After a few journeys, we had a good road. We chopped the ice down, and made a turnpike road. When the boats were all ready and loaded, then the thing was to see the ice give way.”

“ You must have looked anxiously indeed for that,” said Mrs. Armstrong.

"We used to go out and look from the high ground, and have to return and wait. We could see the high land on the opposite side of Regent's Inlet. That was where we wanted to be; that was the land o' plenty—the land o' promise we called it. At last—15th of August it was—a lead opened to the nor'ard. We whips the boats in, struck our tents, and got off."

Margaret asked if a lead meant a lane of water in the ice, and was answered that she was right.

"How many boats had you?" asked Captain Armstrong.

"We had three. We were divided into three companies. There was sixteen of us altogether, I think. Captain Ross commanded one party, Captain James another, and the doctor and purser the third. I belonged to Captain James's party, and we were called the pirates, because the old gentleman used to call him Paul Jones: I don't know for why."

"Well, then, you pulled along through the lead?"

"Yes. We—the pirates, I mean—were always ahead."

"I should have thought Captain Ross's boat would have led," said Edward.

"No. His men did not pull together as we did."

"How was that?"

"Well, I can't say. We had our pipes, and they hadn't. The old gentleman and the doctor and purser, they wouldn't have no smoking aboard; so we used to let 'em start first, and then we cut past, shaking the baccy bag at 'em, and——"

"Well, now, you're afloat," said Captain Armstrong. "Go on, Peter."

"We were to steer for a certain hummock: that's a kind

of pile of broken ice, Miss Margaret; but night came on, and then good-bye to the hummock. We rowed all night, the beautifullest night I ever see. To see the sun set! We pulled seventy-five miles; if we had had daylight, we couldn't have done it better; and we landed at Cape York. I'm telling you wrong, though: we landed one night before that. Any way, we rowed across the strait, and got to Cape York."

"Now, then, you were fairly in Barrow's Strait," said Edward. "Here is Cape York, a little to the eastward of the entrance to Regent's Inlet."

"We had breakfast in the boats; got the kittles under weigh, and landed to rest. We had heavy rain that wetted us to the skin, but no matter. We thought we were in heaven and the holy land. We were allowed an extra supply of meat. We landed another night at Admiralty Inlet, and pitched our tents near a little stream."

"Then you never slept in the boats?" asked Edward.

"No, no, we always landed. Sleeping in the boats would soon have doubled us up; but we had a bad job that night. Found the tide was making round us, and the little stream was become the river Jordan, so we had to flitch up higher. We called it river Jordan, because we were in the land o' promise. I think we stayed there three days. The beach there was strewed with round balls of ice just like cannon-balls."

"You started on the 15th of August," said Captain Armstrong. "Where have you got to now?"

"Well, we got to Navy Board Inlet by the 25th, crossed it, and found a harbour, where we hauled up the boats. We were pretty nigh knocked up, and on short allowance. Next day morning, the 26th it was, David

Wood called me, because I had the watch. We slept in the tent in our blanket-bags, every man in his bag, head to feet."

"How do you mean, Peter?" asked Edward.

"Why, look here, Master Edward; this was the idea of it. We'll say this pencil is a man tied up in a blanket-bag. Here's the lead; this is his head coming out o' the bag. Here's the feet at t'other end. This ere pen's another man in a bag; the neb's his head; the feather's his feet. There we lay 'em side by side, head to feet; don't you understand?"

"Quite," said Edward, laughing.

"We'd no room to spare. We reckoned if a man had room for his feet he'd room for his body. That morning—the 26th, as I said—David Wood stept in a hurried manner over me. His idea was to get at the telescope that was in the pocket of the tent over my head. His doing so made me throw out my boots and dress on the beach, and I always had to pull off my jacket, because my bag was so small. David Wood thought he saw a ship; that was the idea he had when he came for the telescope. I shoved on my boots, and I could see it too."

"What did you feel like, Peter, at such a sight?" cried Edward.

"We called up Captain James," said Peter, who never allowed anything to disturb his calmness. "He woke up and says, 'What's there?' I says, 'A ship, sir.' He stepped on, and as soon as he puts the telescope to his eye, he sings out, 'A ship a-hoy!' At this, all came tumbling out o' the tents in their bags. They'd a' done better if they had got out o' their bags before they came out o' the tents, but they didn't."

"What a state of mind they must all have been in! I

suppose they got out of their bags fast enough," said Edward.

"You may be sure of that. The over-night Captain Ross's boat leaked, and had to be pulled high and dry ashore to be mended. Word was given now, 'All hands launch boats!' Over-night we had to luff tackle purchase to hoist her up, but now we shoved her off in a few minutes; walked her along as easy as if she was empty. Next, word was given, 'Strike tents!' 'Ay, ay, sir!' Orders executed in a crack. I got my fire alight, stove red-hot, and coffee boiled. Captain Ross had gone on the hills to burn a canister of damaged powder as a signal. 'Stow the boats!' was next word. Executed as before. No time for the coffee. By this time Captain Ross had come down again, and there was a consultation."

"His signal had not been answered," said Captain Armstrong. "There *was* no time for coffee, Greely."

"You're right, sir. 'Get your oars out and pull after the ship,' was the next word. 'Now,' says Captain James to his men, 'don't you leave the beach till the others have left. This is to be a day of reality. Mind no signals from the other boats.' You see this was the thing. When Captain Ross wanted to recall us, or make any signal to us, he had his bucket hauled up the mast. 'To-day,' says Captain James, 'nobody shall recall us; this is to be a day of reality.' The instant the others left the beach we commenced pulling. As soon as we started, we got a-head. Up goes the bucket. 'Bucket is up, sir!' 'There let it hang!'—that was his answer. Soon after, report of a musket. 'Ah,' says Captain James, 'we're out of his reach. He can't hit us now. Come, stick to your oars, lads! Pull away! You'll catch her in two hours!' We'd four oars. One of the sick men steered, another managed the sails."

"Had you the wind with you, then?" asked Captain Armstrong.

"No, sir, no; but the idea was to be seen by the ship. The sails impeded us, but we had 'em set, and went a mile about, to show ourselves. Captain James kept the glass continually at his eye. 'Let me have some coffee,' says one of us. I forget which it was; we were growing faint. Captain James's answer was this. Clenching his fist, and pointing it at the ship, he said, 'Not a bit nor a drop shall you have till you fetch that, or die.'"

"Surely he was wrong in that," said Mrs. Armstrong; "it seems unnecessary severity."

"He changed his mind soon," said Peter. "He says, 'Every man shall have one more drink, the best he can have. Take your fill, and then give the can to me.' We had lime-juice and water."

"Was that strengthening enough?" asked Edward.

"It was first-rate, sir. Captain James, as I told you, kept the glass to his eye, and kept telling us what was passing on board. We'd been pulling since four in the morning. When it was near nine, he says, 'Up goes the starboard stunsails!' That was a death-blow to us."

"Why?" asked Margaret.

"It looked as if they were catching the wind and going to make all sail, and so we should lose 'em, miss. 'Up goes the larboard stunsails,' he says next. Another nail in our coffins; that was a stopper. At nine the watch was changed. 'There's a man in the crow's nest,' he says, 'and there's more men on deck, and in a confused sort of order. She's not making much headway. She's nearly becalmed. Now, lads, you'll catch her in an hour.' I says, 'Fire! How do they know we're in distress?' He fired both barrels in

one report. 'Give them another!' I says again. He fired again, 'bang! bang!' They heard both shots, and could see us. They tried to persuade their Captain to lay-to for us. 'Who are they?' says they; 'They're either the "Victory's" crew or some Greenalmen in distress.' "

"How did you know this?" asked Margaret.

"They told us afterwards, miss. When the third watch came up at twelve, all the deck was in confusion. There were lots o' them in the crow's nest. They lay-to."

"She's our prize!" says Captain James. "Now, lads, would you board her if she was an enemy? Better lay-to and let my uncle come up to us. Put your oars by! But we couldn't stop. My head was fixed o' one side, looking at my oar, and we couldn't help dabblin'."

"Poor fellows! No wonder!" said Captain Armstrong.

"Up comes Captain Ross's boat and gets athwart of us, and we get our bowsprit through her sail. 'Never mind! Let her lay!' says Captain James. Meanwhile they lowered a boat from the ship to pull off to meet us. The mate, when he approached, sung out, 'Who are ye? or what are ye?' This was Captain Ross's answer, 'What ship is that?'"

"A true Scotch answer," said Captain Armstrong.

"But listen to the reply, sir," said Peter. "These was the words o' the mate in reply: 'Captain Ross's old discovery ship, the "Isabella!"' "

"It was an extraordinary coincidence, indeed," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"Now, hear Captain Ross's answer this time," said Peter, rising from his seat with a face full of importance,—

"'I'M CAPTAIN ROSS, AND HERE'S MY CREW!'"

"That was capital!" cried Edward.

"Up rose all the men in the boat, and the mate stepped

for'ard and shook hands with him, and said, 'I shall go and acquaint my Captain.'

" 'What's your Captain's name?' says Captain Ross.

" He answered, it was Captain Humphreys; and when he was about half-way, he sings out, 'Victory's crew!' Immediately followed three cheers, and we returned it."

" You well deserved the cheers, Peter. I never heard a story of more bravely endured hardships, nor more patient submission to discipline. You must see, Peter, that if Captain Ross had not kept you all to that, nothing could have saved you."

" All right, sir!" said Peter. " When the men stood up in the 'Isabella's' boat, seeing the difference between their faces and ours, I said to myself, they were all picked men, biggest men out o' the ship—Yorkshiremen, perhaps. We was like sweeps. Well, we went alongside. They put up the 'commodation ladders and handed us in like ladies. We couldn't fall. Captain Ross was handed down to the cabin directly; doctor and purser the same. I'd got Anty Buc the blind man, showing him—telling him, that is—what was doing; so we were last out o' the boat; and when we came on deck, there was Captain James standing; so we told Captain Humphreys that was our officer, and *he* was handed down.

" 'Are they all on board?' cries Captain Humphreys.

" 'Ay, ay, sir.'

" 'Put on a copper o' meat!' That was the first order.

" 'Now, my lads,' says he, next, 'one o' you lug out a pair o' stockings, another a jacket, another a shirt, just as you can spare them.' They wasn't slow; we soon had everything we wanted.

" 'Now, then, mess pots!' says Captain Humphreys;

‘serve out grog to all hands; and when I serve out grog to my crew, I serve out grog to you all!’ Three cheers at that!”

“I’ve no doubt of it,” said Captain Armstrong, laughing.

“Well, sir, after we had the grog—which was a thing we hadn’t tasted for a year and more—nothing but spirits o’ wine—we was handed down, and had a wash and a shave; and, as I said afore, everything we wanted. Many o’ the men had said, whenever they were picked up, we would have a blow-out of salt pork; but I see myself several o’ the men eat, and couldn’t eat. I says ‘I was hungry; now I’m neither hungry, nor yet dry, nor tired.’ We slept that night in the coldest and wettest place we could find, in our bags. We couldn’t bear no other.”

“When did you get home, Peter, did you say?” asked Edward.

“It’s rather a long story, that, sir,” he replied. “You see we——”

“Having got you safe on board the ‘Isabella,’ Greely,” said Captain Armstrong, rising, “I must bid you good-night. It’s time we were all going to rest. I must delay all I have else to say to you, my children, till to-morrow.”

“And about my going?” said Edward, anxiously.

“You must wait till to-morrow.”

Peter had risen and gone to the door, but there he stopped again.

“We all thank you very much, indeed, Greely,” said Mrs. Armstrong; “we have been very much interested in your story.”

“That I am sure we have,” said Margaret, and Edward thanked him warmly with a kind nod and good-night, while Captain Armstrong poured out a glass of wine for him to

drink success to the "Pole-Star." Peter drank it, and health and a safe return to the Captain, but still he did not go.

"You had your supper in the kitchen, Peter, I hope, before you came in?" said Mrs. Armstrong.

"Yes, yes, ma'am, thank you; but—then it's no use for me to say no mere about that matter of going with you, Captain?"

"Of no use at all, Greely. I know the value of a man like you as well as any one, and, as I said, there is not one I should like better, but for your own sake I will not take you. You are twenty years older than when you landed out of the 'Isabella,' married, and well off in the world. Don't think of it. Good-night."

"I wish you all good-night," said Peter. "I don't see, though," he added to himself, as he shut the door, "why the Captain should not take some of that same good advice to himself as he gave to me. It's true he mayn't be as old as me by some ten years or so, but as to being well off, I'm sure *he* don't know when he's well off."

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAGNETIC POLE.

THE sun had not long risen next morning before Edward was seated in a corner of the wood with his drawing-board and colour-box, finishing up a sketch of the cottage that he had been doing for his father to take away with him. He was so engrossed in his work that he did not move for a long while, but sometimes whistled or sang over it, then holding it at a little distance, examined it with a critical

eye, and set to work again to alter or improve it. Suddenly, as if some wretched thought had entered his head, he threw it down, started up, and began to pace about the wood. Presently he returned and set to work again, steadily, but without any more careless whistling. Trident, who was stretched at his feet, sometimes looked up wistfully in his face and then lay down again, with a sigh or short sound of discontent, as if he felt all was not right.

After an hour or more, his sketch being tolerably finished, Edward began to collect his drawing materials together and to go homewards. He observed as he walked along that the pigeons were out, and was pleased to see Sir Launcelot among them, pruning his feathers on the roof as if he had felt no fatigue or injury from his journey, or at any rate had had a good night and was very well this morning. Just as he was thinking so he saw Margaret open her window.

"When are you coming down, Margaret?" he cried, "I want you very much; and bring the peas, will you?"

She nodded, to show him that she heard and would do what he asked, and was with him on the terrace in a few minutes. They strewed the peas for their pigeons, who flew down and pecked them up as fast as possible, Sir Launcelot among the rest. Margaret then had to give her opinion of the sketch, which she pronounced to be exactly like, and lovely.

"Now, then, what I want next is this house to be made for Launcey. Peter said he would come about it this morning. I wish he would."

"Meanwhile, Edward, do tell me about the magnetic pole. I thought we knew about the north pole long ago, and that the needle always pointed to it."

"You see, Maggie," said Edward, "the north pole of the earth is one thing, and the magnetic pole is another. You never read any voyages without hearing of the variation of the needle."

"No; I always have wanted to understand what that meant."

"Well, it means the variation of the needle from due north. You know that the north pole is 90° from the equator, and that all the meridians of longitude are drawn through it. They all pass through it, so that we cannot say the north pole is any longitude; all we can say of it is, the latitude 90°."

"Yes; I have learned that, and that it is the point on which the earth revolves: the north and south poles are the spots that are still while the earth spins round."

"But the magnetic pole is not the centre of motion, it is the centre of magnetic attraction, and Sir James Ross found its exact place. It is in latitude 70° 3' 17" north, and in longitude 96° 46' 13" west."

"Oh, that is a long way from the north pole. But how did he find the place? Was there some great magnet there?"

"That is exactly what he says people might have expected. I brought out his account of finding it, published in Captain Ross's narrative of his voyage, and will read you the passage:—

"The land at this place is very low near the coast, but it rises into ridges of fifty or sixty feet high about a mile inland. We could have wished that a place so important had possessed more of mark or note. It was scarcely censurable to regret that there was not a mountain to indicate a spot to which so much of interest must ever be attached; and I could even have pardoned any one among

us who had been so romantic or absurd as to expect that the magnetic pole was an object as conspicuous and mysterious as the fabled mountain of Sinbad, that it even was a mountain of iron, or a magnet as large as Mont Blanc. But nature had here erected no monument to denote the spot which she had chosen as the centre of one of her great and dark powers.' "

"And how did Sir James Ross know that he had found the place?"

"He had been making observations with different instruments for some time, and so had Sir Edward Parry, in his last voyage, and had come very near it by calculation."

"I cannot think how."

"You must observe, in the first place, that I do not understand it all myself, Maggie, or anything like all, and that if I did I could not make you, unless you had studied very hard. But I can give you some idea. You remember that when Parry got to the 73rd degree of latitude, and the 89th degree of longitude, the compass became useless?"

"Yes; I think I begin to see a little. Of course, if the needle always points to the magnetic pole, it will not move at all when it gets really to the very magnetic pole itself; and if it gets to the north of it, it will point to the south, and if it gets due east of it, it will point west, and so on."

"That is exactly the thing, Maggie. So people at home even, could reason about it from the accounts of voyagers and travellers, especially Parry and Franklin, and find out pretty nearly whereabouts it must be. If Parry said 'the needle pointed south' then they would say he had got to the north of the magnetic pole. If Franklin said 'the

needle pointed east,' they would be sure he was to the west of it, and so the exact spot was pretty nearly guessed."

"But what did Sir James Ross do to make quite sure?"

"He knew that where the 'Victory' lay they were very near the place. He had employed himself during all the time he had been there in experiments with different instruments, and, in May of 1831, he set off with a party taking instruments of different kinds with him, to try to find the very place. He had horizontal needles, like those you know, and also dipping needles. These are so made as to point downwards, not to point to the horizon, but to the centre of the earth."

"Yes, I understand."

"When he arrived as nearly as he could reckon at the spot, he had an observatory built. This is his account:—

"The place of the observatory was as near to the magnetic pole as the limited means which I possessed enabled me to determine. The amount of the dip as indicated by my dipping needle was $89^{\circ} 59'$, being thus within one minute of the vertical.' Do you understand that, Maggie?"

"Not quite. I know there are sixty minutes in a degree, so if the needle had pointed to one minute more it would have been 90° ."

"Well, then, 90° would have been vertical, as he calls it, or pointing straight down to the centre of the earth. I think I could tell you why I know that, but you had better believe me that it would have been so till you have learned about the circle. In short, the dipping needle pointed all but quite straight down towards the earth."

"Read on, please, Edward."

"The proximity [or nearness] at least of this pole, if not its actual existence where we stood, was further con-

firmed by the action, or rather by the total inaction, of the several horizontal needles then in my possession. These were suspended in the most delicate manner possible, but there was not one which showed the slightest effort to move from the position in which it was placed.' ”

“He must have been very glad. Was Peter there?”

“Yes; he helped to make the instruments and take the observations. He has told me how pleased they all were, and Sir James Ross describes it. Shall I read what he says?”

“Yes, do.”

“‘As soon as I had satisfied my own mind on this subject, I made known to the party this gratifying result of all our joint labours; and it was then that amidst mutual congratulations we fixed the British flag on the spot, and took possession of the North Magnetic Pole and its adjoining territory in the name of Great Britain and King William the Fourth. We had abundance of materials for building in the fragments of limestone that covered the beach; and we therefore erected a cairn of some magnitude, under which we buried a canister containing a record of the interesting fact; only regretting that we had not the means of constructing a pyramid of more importance, and of strength sufficient to withstand the attacks of time and of the Esquimaux.’

“He then tells the latitude and longitude, which I told you before. Look, this is the place—on the west coast of Boothia, just south of Cape Adelaide.”

“So the north magnetic pole is in America. And there is nothing to be seen, he says; only the flat sea-shore, and fragments of limestone lying about; and it has some power

that attracts and makes the needle always point to it! What *can* it be?"

"It is wonderful."

"Edward, does it not seem to you just as silly to plant the British flag there, and take possession of it for King William the Fourth, as it did of Balboa to wade into the water with his drawn sword and take possession of the Pacific Ocean for the King of Spain?"

"Oh, no, Maggie! We did not mean to keep the magnetic pole for our own use (even if we could). Only to leave a sign that Englishmen had discovered it. Oh, it would have been grand to be there and help to hoist the flag!"

"And is the use of the magnetic pole just to make the needle point to it?"

"Oh, no. All manner of important things in the world depend on magnetism and electricity, which, as far as I can understand, seem very much the same. But people are always learning and finding out more about them. My father only began teaching it all to me quite lately, and we were to have gone on steadily. . . . What shall I do? What will become of me?"

"Edward! dear Edward! you are crying; you must let me try to comfort you."

Edward had buried his face in his hands, and his tears were streaming through his fingers. Margaret's fell on his hair as she leaned over him.

"I am sure he does not mean me to go with him," said Edward, in a broken voice; "I know he does not, before he tells me."

"Oh, Edward! I cannot be sorry for that. Think what mamma and I should feel to part with you both!"

"Nothing could make it worse to my mother than it will be."

"He went three years ago, and you and I did not mind it so much."

"We were so much younger. We did not know what he is to us as we do now."

"There is Peter coming!"

"I will be back in a minute. Keep him till I come," said Edward, dashing down into the wood, followed by Trident. Margaret got up quickly from the garden-chair on which she was sitting, wiped away her tears, and began strewing a few more peas for the pigeons.

"Good morning, miss!" said Peter, coming up with his basket of tools on his shoulder. "Do you still think of sending the pigeon aboard?"

"Oh yes, we do!"

"Does the Captain know about it?"

"No, we did not like to trouble him till we had tried a long journey for the little thing; but now, if you think you could manage a nice house or box for it, we will ask him directly."

"You see, miss, there are two or three things to be considered—But where is Master Edward? I see him here as I came up the hill."

Edward appeared at that moment on the steep path that led from the wood, playing with Trident, who was leaping and dashing about among the ferns.

"Good morning, Peter! So you have not forgotten to come," he cried, looking so cheerful that Margaret was surprised. She saw that she must not, as she had often done, think Edward did not feel because he did not seem unhappy.

"I have been saying, Master Edward, that there are two or three things to be considered: first, not to take up too much room, and yet to make it large enough; secondly, not to make it too heavy, and yet to make it strong; thirdly, to make it warm and water-tight. Now I've been thinking we couldn't do better than take a hint from the Esquimaw."

"But they make snow houses in Boothia, and stone huts in other places. Neither of these would do."

"No, no. I'm not thinking of their houses, but their canoes. The Esquimaw of Baffin's Bay have canoes that are wonderful well contrived: the frame is made of whale-bone, and covered with seal-skin; they are about eighteen feet long, tapering to a point fore and aft, and about twenty-one inches in the beam. They just hold one man, don't you see. He sits nearly in the middle—a little, maybe, towards the stern—in a man-hole, and stretches out his feet under the deck, as we may call the covering of the top. Do you understand?"

"I quite understand."

"When the man, who is dressed all in skins, gets in and fastens the rim of his man-hole, as he does, tight round his jacket or jumper, as we called it, so as to be water-tight, he minds the cold and the water no more than a seal or a walrus. Him and his kayak (that's what they call a canoe) looks just one animal. They'll be out day and night on the stormy seas among the ice, and take no hurt—catching seals, it may be, or carrying the post from one Danish settlement on the coast of Greenland to another, for they are employed in that way. The Esquimaw there, don't you see, have more sense, and have learned more from being near the Danish settlements."

"Oh yes, that is quite natural; and they have been taught Christianity by the Moravian missionaries."

"Yes, they are good, simple people, very honest, which is more than I can say for other tribes of them; and none of the Esquimaw drink. They won't taste spirits, but water—how they will drink water! A gallon's nothing to them. And as for eating—see an Esquimaw with some seal-blubber or raw walrus! You would never believe me if I was to tell you."

"But, Peter, about the house we are to have for the pigeon?"

"I'm coming to that. As I tell you, a man in his kayak will ride over the surf like a sea-bird, paddling with his two-bladed oar; and when night comes on he will turn into some cove, draw up his kayak under the lee of a cliff, get in again, lean his head against a rock, draw his hood over his face, and sleep till morning, not caring for snow, ice, nor wind, with the thermometer below zero."

"We don't know what men can do and bear till we see things like that," said Edward.

"Then you think of making Sir Launcelot a canoe to live in?" said Margaret, laughing. "Fancy the little fellow sitting in the middle, in his pigeon-hole!"

"Miss Margaret," said Peter, looking grave, "all I mean is, as I said, to take a hint. The house we make must either be square—about a foot square, I should think, would do, or eighteen inches long by a foot deep. The height need not be much; pigeons do not care to perch; they do very well standing on the flat ground. Say nine or ten inches high."

"Will he keep his health in such a little place?" asked Margaret.

"I think he would," said Edward, "if it was kept very clean, and my father would take care that was done."

"To be sure he would," said Peter. "He would give the order, 'See that when the decks is scrubbed of a morning the pigeon's house is seen to!' or something of that sort, and it would be done as reg'lar as the clock."

"Then, should you make it of whalebone and seal-skin?"

"I think we could not do better, Miss Margaret. The front must be open, of course, in bars."

"I should think they should be wood, smooth and round," said Edward.

"We must think about it," replied Peter. "The thing is, don't you see, that in the cold there, wood grows so brittle, that unless it's thick and strong, it snaps like glass. Metal of any kind won't do, of course, because it burns like hot iron."

"I cannot think why that is, Edward. I have heard it before."

"My father will explain it much better than I can. I could, only he will make it so much clearer, that you had better ask him."

"Well, then," said Margaret, "the bars might be white bone, such as knife-handles are made of; or ivory would be very pretty, only I suppose it would be extravagant."

"Either would be better than wood. I'll tell you something, now, that will show you: we made a wooden leg for one of the Esquimaw."

"Poor fellow! how had he lost his leg?"

"It was a frost-bitten foot, you see, Master Edward, and it was so bad that he put his leg in an ice-crack o' purpose,

and broke it short off underneath the knee, and then he cut the bone clean."

"Oh, Peter," cried Margaret, shuddering, "how horrible! I can hardly believe you."

"Well, we made him a wooden leg. We fitted it on him, and gave him two sticks first to walk with. He couldn't manage at all, so I strapped it on myself, and showed him, and he learned how."

"What did you do with your own leg, Peter?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, I just bent my knee, miss, and let the leg stick out behind. Next day he came with one stick, and very soon he came with none, and was as proud of his leg as you please. There he used to come and jump about, and go through his degrees, I assure you. We carved the 'Victory's' name on it, and finished it off with brass, and he always wore two stockings on it, and one on his other."

"What did the silly fellow do that for?" asked Margaret.

"He was quite right, miss. It was for fear the frost should get at it and snap it. That's what I wanted to tell you. Be sure that leg will be taken care of among them."

In the midst of the laughter this story caused, the breakfast bell rang, and their father and mother came out and walked along the terrace together.

"So Peter is telling you some more of his stories, is he?" said Captain Armstrong, after their affectionate "Good morning!" had been said.

"Yes, and we have been holding a conversation about something, father," said Edward. "We must tell you, and ask you whether you like our idea, presently."

"Meanwhile," said Mrs. Armstrong, "Peter had better go and have some breakfast and attend to a few little pieces

of work that have to be done. We shall be able to give him his order afterwards."

Peter accordingly went in; and Mrs. Armstrong, as they walked up and down all together to enjoy the fresh air and the songs of the birds, announced to Edward and Margaret that she had told their father about the way in which they had trained Launcy, and that he had agreed to take the little fellow, and would perhaps send them a message by him.

"I really will take Launcy," said he, "if I can depend on you all not to make him a source of anxiety. Many things may prevent me from sending him off. The poor little thing may die, though I will do my utmost to take care of him; so do not look up so pitifully, my little Maggie! Then, if he were apparently weak, I should not like to send him off; and in any case, if everything went well with me, and I had good chance of coming home at the end of the second summer, I should almost shrink from risking his life. I should be inclined to be my own letter carrier."

"That would be best of all, papa," said Margaret.

"If such happy fortune should attend me as that I found Franklin, I would send him. I should not be able to resist the attempt to make you and all England sharers in my joy, without waiting for the tedious passage homeward."

"I think," said Mrs. Armstrong, "you must try to send him, Henry. You know how I should rejoice if you succeeded in your grand purpose; but to know that, successful or not, you were safe and well after the dangers of next winter, would be very much to me. I should hardly know how to wish for anything more."

"But if he never comes, believe that I am, and that I hope to be home in autumn. I will not send him unless I

resolve to stay a second winter ; unless, as I said before, I have been so happy as to find Franklin."

CHAPTER V.

EDWARD'S FATE IS DECIDED.

BREAKFAST being over, and Peter dismissed with orders to make the pigeon's house according to the plan proposed, Captain Armstrong said he would finish the conversation of the evening before, and explain his intended route. "Your mother knows it already," said he, smiling, "but I believe she is going to listen again."

"You see, papa," said Margaret, "she will not have you long to listen to, so she will not miss a word you say now. I know that is the reason."

There was a little silence. Edward took his mother's hand, and pressed it ; and Captain Armstrong stooped down to pick up a map, and looked a little while at it before he went on.

"I told you," he then said, "to look at Beechey Island when I began last night. Find it again ; I shall soon have occasion to tell you more about it. Franklin's expedition in search of the north-west passage was the first after Sir John Ross's, of which you heard Peter's account. Franklin went in 1845, with the 'Erebus' and 'Terror'; the 'Terror' commanded by Captain Fitzjames, and the united crews amounting to one hundred and forty men. They were provisioned for three years. Their route was very much left to Franklin's own discretion ; it is at any rate difficult to decide, by reading the Admiralty instructions, which was

most recommended to him. He wrote from Baffin's Bay that all were well in July. When the season of 1848 came round, and he had not been heard of since the date of these letters, people became anxious at home; and his old travelling companion, Richardson, went to the mouth of the Mackenzie River and explored all the coast to the Coppermine, assisted by the boats of the 'Plover' and 'Herald,' in case Franklin had tried that more southerly passage; while Sir James Ross (Peter's hero, Captain James) went out with the 'Enterprise' and 'Investigator' to Lancaster Sound. Sir James Ross wintered on Leopold Island, but returned next season without any success, and after a very narrow escape from the ice."

"Then you went soon afterwards," said Edward.

"When 1850 came, and still no tidings, the anxiety was general, and great energy was put forth to find the missing ships. The search for the north-west passage became only a secondary object. To find Franklin was the great hope and desire. I had just returned from the south seas, and with my consent John sailed with M'Clure in the 'Investigator,' which was despatched by Behring's Straits with the expedition commanded by Captain Collinson, in case Franklin had gone very far west and there been stopped. They have not returned yet. They may have succeeded, yet it seems too much to hope. On the contrary, it is impossible to help being anxious about their own fate. The 'Resolute,' under Captain Kellet, has been specially sent to their rescue by Melville Island, and I hope that this autumn will see them return in safety."

"Yes," said Mrs. Armstrong, "I do trust that John will spend his next winter with us."

"I hope he will come home safe," said Edward. "We

never thought when we bid him good-bye he would stay such a time. I remember it as well as if it was yesterday. What a good fellow John is! Wherever he is he will keep every one round him merry."

"You must take good care of him when you get him back," said Captain Armstrong. "Three winters in the ice must try any man, however strong he may be."

"Now tell us about your going, papa," said Margaret, "and the names of all the ships."

"Captain Austin's squadron, with which I sailed, consisted of the 'Resolute,' his own ship, the 'Assistance' under Captain Ommanney, and the 'Intrepid' and 'Pioneer,' two steamers under Captains Cator and Osborne. Then there were two fine brigs under Captain Penny, the 'Lady Franklin' and 'Sophia'; the 'Felix' under old Sir John Ross, with the 'Mary' as tender; two American vessels, the 'Rescue' and 'Advance,' sent out by Mr. Grinnell, an American merchant, at his own expense, entirely from his sympathy with the cause; and there was the 'Prince Albert,' Lady Franklin's own little ship."

"What a number of ships!" said Margaret; "and none of them could find him!"

"No, no, none of them could find him! They all went by Baffin's Bay and explored the different channels and inlets in vain. Yet our hopes were raised our first season by what we found at Beechey Island, as I said."

"Oh, tell us the story of it!" cried Margaret.

"You must fancy us exploring the northern shore of Barrow's Strait. We were ashore near Cape Riley. Suddenly we came to a spot on which pieces of rope and canvas, broken bottles and a long-handled tool that sailors use to rake up from the bottom of the sea, were lying about

in confusion. We could scarcely trust ourselves with the idea or the hope, but it flashed across our minds that we had found traces of Franklin. Our lost brothers might be near us. We ran about in all directions. We found a tent-place next; a round space where a tent had certainly been pitched. In the midst of our excitement an accident put us to flight and stopped our search for that day. We were peering about in all directions when we were suddenly attacked by a bear."

"And were you obliged to run away, father?" asked Edward.

"We were but a boat's crew, and had no arms or means of defence, so all we could do was to push off in the boat while he went off towards the packed ice."

"Our news, you may be sure, flew like wildfire among the ships. Next day parties from all within reach were on the spot. We found, near Cape Spencer, the walls of a hut of a circular form, solidly built, neatly paved with small smooth stones, and containing a fireplace where still lay the cold ashes of the last fire lighted there. Many bones of birds, and empty meat-tins were scattered near it. We believe this to have been a look-out place over Barrow's Strait and Wellington Channel. We could not doubt now that we had found traces of Franklin, but our hearts sank at observing marks of long exposure to weather. They were not recent traces."

"One of us picked up a piece of paper with the words 'To be called' still distinctly readable, also a piece of newspaper. There were sledge marks leading northward, but they were soon lost in the snow that had fallen since. On the western shore was a cairn built of layers of meat-tins filled with gravel. There was also the embankment of a house, which

seemed to have been used as a carpenter's and smith's working places, by the shavings and bits of iron filings. There were also washing-tubs, made of empty meat-casks, and some coal-bags."

"On the eastern shore was the remnant of a garden."

"Oh, papa, think of the poor sailors making a garden!" said Margaret. "Was anything growing in it still?"

"Some poppies and anemones that had been transplanted there still showed some signs of life. The garden had a neat oval outline made with moss and lichen. Not far from it was a pair of cashmere gloves spread out to dry, with a pebble on each palm."

"How did you know what year they were here, papa?" asked Margaret.

"A melancholy record told us, Maggie. We found three graves. Each was neatly constructed with an oaken headboard and footboard, and each had an inscription. I copied them down and will read them to you:—

" 'Sacred to the memory of J. Torrington, who departed this life Jan. 1st, 1846, on board H.M.S. "Terror," aged 20 years.

" 'Sacred to the memory of W. Braine, R.M., of H.M.S. "Erebus," died April 3rd, 1846, aged 32 years.

" 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.—*Josh. xxiv. 15.*

" 'Sacred to the memory of J. Hartwell, A.B., of H.M.S. "Erebus," died Jan. 4th, 1846, aged 25 years.

" 'Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.—*Hag. i. 7.* "

"I remember," said Mrs. Armstrong, "Captain Osborne remarking that wherever English sailors go, all over the

world, there will be found the graves of their comrades whom they have lost by death, made with all the religious care that could be given to the task at home."

"Yes, it is a true remark, and the graves of those three poor fellows afford an instance of it. But where are they who laid them there? No notice could we find of their intended course when they should leave their winter quarters. We searched every possible and impossible place. The cairn was pulled down and built up again and again before we could believe that it contained no writing to guide us. At last we gave it up in despair, and were left to conjecture.

"During the winter everything was done that was possible. Every ship left a record of its visit at Cape Riley, and landed provisions also, in case the missing ships should call there again. Penny pushed up Wellington Channel as far as Cornwallis Island, where he was stopped by a barrier of ice, but saw open water beyond, to the north, as far as the eye could reach."

"That was the Polar Ocean that you believe in, father: was it not?" asked Edward.

"It was; and he saw it again in his sledge journey in spring. The Americans passed a dreadful winter, drifting up and down Wellington Channel in the ice. The 'Prince Albert' returned home. The rest of the ships were frozen in, in different harbours, well protected from cold, and their crews well off. The little that could be done during the winter months was done. Rockets were frequently put up; fire-balloons were also sent up, so managed as to scatter papers down, on which the situations of the rescue ships were described. We sent out postmen too."

"Sent out postmen, papa?"

"Yes; little white postmen, all clothed in fur. You

must know that we sometimes caught foxes in traps, and the foxes there are the prettiest creatures you can imagine, with long soft white fur, and large bushy tails, all as white as snow, and their quick black eyes shining out under their little, pointed ears. Well, sometimes we used to put a hollow brass collar round their necks, and in the collar a paper, telling exactly where our ships lay, with the date of course, and then let them run away."

"You hoped some of Sir John Franklin's party would see a fox with a collar, wonder at it and catch him, and find the paper? What a pity they never did!"

"Our hopes, from whatever we tried, all ended in disappointment. In spring we made long journeys with sledges, but still all in vain. Five ships are still out exploring under Sir Edward Belcher, and the 'Advance,' one of the American ships, is just going again."

"Dr. Kane is to command her this time, I think?" said Mrs. Armstrong.

"Yes, he was surgeon in the former voyage."

"What a brave, energetic spirit he must have," said Mrs. Armstrong, "to go again, so soon after all they had to suffer in that voyage!"

"There are few spirits like his. There never was a nobler fellow, and his active enterprise is the more remarkable because he has very bad health, and a slight, delicately-formed figure. He has travelled into almost every quarter of the globe. To know him was well worth all the hardships we endured."

"And is Mr. Grinnell at the expense of this expedition, too?" asked Mrs. Armstrong.

"Yes, he is. It is the more noble, as his benevolence is exerted not for his fellow-countrymen but for Englishmen."

He feels, as everyone ought to do, that all men are brothers, the English and the Americans especially."

"It showed a fine spirit too in the Americans," said Edward, "to make that declaration you told me of, father, before they set out, that if they succeeded in finding Franklin they would not accept any part of the reward of twenty thousand pounds offered by the English Government."

"It did. We had another high-minded and delightful officer out with us that winter, who was not an Englishman. I mean Bellot, a lieutenant in the French navy. He is now there again, in Sir Edward Belcher's squadron. He was as enthusiastic in the cause, as if Franklin had been his own father."

Edward looked at his father as if he could hardly believe that.

"Kane is going this year to Smith's Sound, quite at the north of Baffin's Bay. You see by the chart how little of it is known, and how direct a route it is to the Polar Ocean, in which Kane and I have full belief. Supposing open water to exist there all the year round—and there are many reasons to believe it does—suppose Franklin sailed northward up Wellington Channel when he left Cape Riley and got into it, and that he is there now, the ice never having opened again to let him get free,—see how important it is to force our way to that ocean. For this reason, while Kane explores Smith's Sound, I mean to follow Jones' Sound, a grand opening leading more to the west, and still less known than the other. This is to be my course: you see it as far as it has been traced on the chart."

Edward and Margaret had found it and were listening with the greatest interest.

"I am furnished with capital sledges, and shall take in

—as Kane will also do—a good team of dogs in Greenland. I have all the experience of former voyagers as to the best clothing, food, means of warmth and ventilation. I shall push on as far as possible this season; winter in the best harbour I can find; make excursions with sledges in spring. If it is the will of God to crown my efforts with such success as to let me find and rescue our lost brothers, we shall get out of harbour in summer when the ice opens, and——”

“Dear Henry! Oh, may it be His will indeed!” said Mrs. Armstrong, taking his hand.

“I do not think I am over-hopeful in supposing that they *may* have been able to maintain their lives there. That Northern Ocean probably abounds in life. Where do the myriads of sea-birds go that are seen in great flocks every summer flying northwards?—to the rocks and cliffs of that ocean, to their breeding-grounds, doubtless. In every region, however far north, that we have explored, we still see birds, animals, shoals of fishes, whales, and narwhales, going farther north. The seal and walrus find open water there when all is locked up in ice farther south. A man of Franklin’s experience and energy would not fail to find means of lifethere. The poor Esquimaux live all their lives on those icy shores, why cannot men of intelligence and resource live there for a few years? Look at the Russian sailors in Spitzbergen, with much smaller means and a severer climate, yet they lived there seven years. Why should not Franklin be yet alive on the shores of that ocean, though eight years have passed?”

Edward’s face beamed as his father spoke, and in his excitement his hopes rose again.

“And you will take me, father? you mean to take me?” he cried.

Captain Armstrong pressed both Edward’s hands be-

tween his, "Listen to me, my boy," he said, "I could not take you without risking your life. You are too young to bear the cold of winter in the latitude I am bound for. If you were even one year older, I might think of it, because I know you are both brave in spirit and strong in body, but at your age it is not a thing to be thought of. I have told you my first and strongest reason against it; I have others, which I shall explain to you afterwards: but do not think of it again."

Edward had sunk his head upon his father's hand and trembled violently, but did not speak. Captain Armstrong laid his other hand on his boy's head, and said softly, "May God bless and keep you, my own dear Edward!" There was then a long silence, and when Edward at last lifted up his face he found that he and his father were alone in the room.

"I want my boy to be strong and brave," said Captain Armstrong, looking at him affectionately.

"Then why do you refuse to let me go and share hardships and strive for success with you?"

"The hardships and the hope have nothing to do with the question. The real question is, What is it right to do? It is my duty to go, but it is yours to remain; and when we clearly see what our duty is, then we must do it. There ought never to be a moment's hesitation. If we can say that a certain course is the right one, then we must take that course."

"I see what you have to do, but what have I to do? When you leave me alone I shall feel as if I was cast away without anything to guide me, and with nothing to set about."

"On the contrary, this is perhaps the most important year of your life. First of all, your mother and sister will

need affection, sympathy, and care, such as a son and brother can give whose father is absent."

"Oh, I can do nothing to make up to them for the loss of you."

"Yes, you can do much ; and I charge you to do all in your power. You will not forget, Edward ?"

"No, I will not forget, my dear father."

"John, if he returns, as I trust he will, in autumn, will be much out of health ; you must take care of him, nurse him, and get up his strength again. You will not neglect this ?"

"No, I will not."

"Now I come to yourself. You are to go back to Dr. Truman's every morning and attend the Greek, Latin, and mathematical classes, as well as the French and German. The year's hard work we have had together has put you well forward. You will find yourself quite a match for the boys of your own standing. As to our other studies and experiments, they must wait till I come back, unless John should get well enough to be inclined to work with you. In that case, you cannot have a better teacher. Then as to books, there are plenty, and your mother will guide your choice among them. You must continue our evening reading."

"And my drawing ?"

"I have not forgotten it. Your great wish is to become an artist, and you long to travel and make pictures. I promise that when I return you shall have the best education as an artist that I can command for you, but this year's work is necessary first. A man with a vacant mind can be only half an artist. I know that you will work hard this year."

"Yes, I will."

"Then you shall commence your studies in good earnest when I come home. Who knows but we may all travel together some day?"

It was a happy prospect, but at that moment Edward could not look at it. His pale face only seemed to grow paler.

"Still you are going away. I cannot forget that."

"Edward! you remember Milton's grand sonnet:—

" ' God does not need
Either man's work or his own gifts ; who best
Bear his mild yoke they serve Him best : his state
Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest.
They also serve who only stand and wait.' "

"I am at the moment one of the thousands who 'speed o'er land and ocean at his word,' you have for this short time to 'stand and wait.' If I, feeling as I do that I may be appointed to serve Him by rescuing our lost countrymen, hold back, and do not go; or if you, seeing before you the year's work that I have pointed out to you, refuse to do it, how can we stand before Him? We ought to be as obedient to the will of God as a man's hand is to him. You remember how we liked those words when your mother read them to us?"

"I remember, father," said Edward, and his face flushed, and hope and energy seemed to arise in him.

There was a pause, during which Edward seemed to have made up his mind to bear his disappointment bravely; but a new sad thought rose in him—the danger to his father. He broke the silence by saying:—

"But we know that when God calls any one into circumstances such as you are going into, He calls him into danger."

"Viewing it in one way, that is true. But life is always, as I may say, on the point of death. If a man's breath quite stops for three minutes, life is over. A fall on a level road, a loose tile falling from a roof, a stone thrown by a child's hand, a hundred trifles such as these have all caused death; while thousands return unharmed from battle-fields, storm, ice, and fire. We can none of us foresee our fate from one hour to another, and if we shrink from danger we should never move at all, and might then find that we were in the very midst of it. The only thing is to do the will of God to the utmost of our power, with perfect trust in Him."

"I shall never forget your words, father."

"If you are ever in danger of it, go to the Fountain-head, my boy. He who came to bear witness to the truth is a perfect example of all I have imperfectly tried to say to you. He did his work with untiring energy. He avoided and averted danger till his work was done, and when the hour was come—that dreadful hour! What are our little trials to that? His words were—say them, Edward!"

A very low whisper, so soft that no one could have heard the words who did not listen so closely as Captain Armstrong, said, in obedience and reverence—

"Father, Thy will, not mine, be done."

CHAPTER VI.

DEPARTURE.

SEVERAL days passed, during which there was so much to do that the family, so soon to be divided, had little time to think of the approaching parting. Captain Armstrong had to be in London a great deal on business, and was seldom home till late, and even then was engaged in arrangements for the voyage. Margaret and her mamma had numbers of pieces of work to do, preparing warm woollens and furs. Edward wrote, copied, made lists, packed books, went messages. Every one was busy.

Sir Launcelot appeared to be quite strong, and ready to begin another journey. A sack of peas for his especial use was placed among the provisions, so Captain Armstrong said, and that, if they failed, there were always plenty of split peas in a ship. Margaret exclaimed, that surely her papa did not mean to stay away till Launcy had eaten a sack of peas, but was answered with a laugh, that she had no idea how much people and pigeons could eat when they got near the pole.

Talking about Launcy made Margaret think of his box, and at the first opportunity she and Edward set out to see Peter and ask how he was getting on with it. Peter was at work in his shop with his paper cap on when they stopped at his gate, and received them very kindly, insisting on their going into the parlour, into which he summoned Mrs. Greely, to entertain them while he finished a little job he was about. Mrs. Greely was a very gentle, quiet woman, extremely tidy and precise in her ways, and had her house and everything in it so clean and neat that

it was a wonder that Peter could think of leaving it, for no reason but to satisfy a roving disposition. He never could give any reason why he went with Captain Ross, except that he had thirty shillings a week in an engineer's factory, and did not think they gave him enough work to do for it, so that one day when a friend came in and asked him if he wouldn't like to go to the North Pole he answered, "Well, I don't care if I do," and went.

He presently came in with Sir Launcelot's house, which was finished and looked very nice. He had put bars of white bone, nicely turned, in front, and made it altogether to the satisfaction both of Edward and Margaret. There was a little trough to hold the food, and he advised that split peas should occasionally be given as a change, and also grain of some kind, barley or oats for instance; to which, as he said, pigeons always helped themselves out of the farmers' crops at harvest time. Margaret proposed putting in something to hold water, but Peter quite disapproved of that, saying, that as long as water was water it would splash about and make the bird damp and wet, and when it was a lump of ice, what was the use of it to a pigeon? So Margaret said, that whoever took charge of Launcy must be told to be sure to give him water. Edward proposed that a hood of soft leather, with a few holes for air, should be made to cover the whole in very cold weather, and this was approved.

Margaret next said she wanted Peter to make some shallow boxes to hold earth, that her papa might sow with mustard and cress, as Captain Parry did, and grow it near the stove. Peter said, however, that the ship's carpenter would soon knock up some boxes; the difficulty would be to find earth.

"But they could land somewhere and fill them," she said.

"It must be somewhere near home, then, miss," said Peter; "there's mighty little earth to be seen where they're going. It's all hard rock, snow, or ice. You had better tell the Captain of your idea. It's not a bad one. And then, if he thinks he'd like to try it, why he can get a sack of earth put aboard at Aberdeen, or the Orkney Islands, if he touches there, and take a bag of seed. That's all, as I see, that he can do."

When Edward and Margaret came in sight of the cottage on their way back, they saw a man in a sailor's jacket walking up and down before the door, smoking a short pipe; a truck loaded with luggage was by his side. Edward divined the truth in a moment, and darted forwards, followed by Margaret, who ran as fast as she could. He knew the man to be Abel Hardy, one of the seamen of the "Pole-Star," but he did not wait to ask questions. It was all clear to him. The ship was to sail sooner than had been expected, and a messenger had been sent for his father. He threw open the drawing-room door. No one was there. He passed through quickly to the study. There stood his father and mother. Her head was resting on her husband's shoulder. Her face was hidden, but he raised his at the sound of the opening door, and held out his hand to Edward, who grasped it in both his. No one spoke.

In another minute Margaret's soft round arms enclosed all three, and she covered her father's bent head with kisses. He whispered in Edward's ear—

"You are to set off by train to Aberdeen to-morrow morning, and bring the bird and everything else I leave

behind in this hasty summons, and see me off. Now take away my little Maggie, and leave us alone."

Edward disengaged the clinging arms, and led her gently away. She could scarcely walk; she was blinded by her tears.

"God bless and protect you, my dear, dear children!" were the last words they heard their father speak.

In five minutes more his quick, firm step was heard in the hall. The door opened and closed. He was gone.

They rushed to a window to see him walk towards the station. He never looked back, but went fast on, followed by Abel with the truck. They watched him till he disappeared behind the trees. It felt very lonely and desolate. They crept to the study now and then, and listened and wished to go in, but feared disturbing their mother. Sometimes they heard her walking up and down, but generally she was very quiet. At last they heard her go up to her own room. In about two hours she sent for them to the drawing-room, and received them with her sweet smile. They were almost startled at the deadly paleness of her face, but she spoke cheerfully, and set them both to work to assist her in finishing the packing and preparations that had necessarily been left unfinished. Edward had also to go to Peter, to tell him to bring the box, and to cord and nail up the packing-cases. Launcy had to be well fed and attended to, that he might be strong and ready for going; and Edward himself had to prepare for starting by the early train. By seven o'clock next morning he too had left home.

"Come back safe to us, little dear Launcy," Margaret had said, as she stroked and kissed him before she sent him off; "come back safe, and bring us good news. Bid him good-bye, mamma."

Her mother took him in both her hands, and laid her cheek on his soft feathers, but could not speak.

They sat together for a long while without moving or saying a word after Edward had gone; Margaret on a stool at her mother's feet, with her head on her lap. Till this moment there had been so much hurry and so much to do, that it was only now they quite understood how much they had lost. But now it came really home to them. About the room lay the remains of their packing: ends of cord and string, and pieces of brown paper and canvas. Heaps of books were strewn on the floor, thrown there while selecting those that were to be taken. The sun shone brightly, and the birds sang merrily in the fresh morning. It sounded like a mockery to the hearts full of sorrow within, and a large tear fell on Margaret's cheek. She started up, and as she looked at her mother's wan face and quivering lips, said—

“Come up and lie down, dear mamma; I know you have been up all night at work for papa. You are very, very tired. I will bring your breakfast up after you have laid down.”

Her mother yielded immediately; she knew that she must rest now, that she might be ready for *her* duty, as her husband had been for his. Her head was soon resting on her pillow; she had taken some tea, and eaten as much as she could force herself to take, and then Margaret darkened the window.

“Open it behind the curtains, dear child; let me feel the fresh air.”

Margaret obeyed.

“Now come to me, my darling.”

Margaret threw her arms round the dear neck, received

one long kiss and loving look, watched the eyelids as they closed over the large tender blue eyes she loved best in the world, kissed away the tears as they slowly formed and glided down between the long black eyelashes; watched for a few minutes till the measured breathing told her that sleep had come, and then turned away, and softly and on tip-toe left the room, and went down-stairs to take precautions against the least noise that might awake the sleeper.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

WE pass quickly over a few months after the period of Captain Armstrong's departure. Summer had gone, autumn had followed, and had brought pleasant letters from him, sent from Upernavik, the most northern of the Danish settlements on the coast of Greenland. He himself and all his crew were in good health, and the prospects of the voyage, judging from the state of the ice, were good. He did not forget to mention Sir Launcelot, who, he said, was quite well, well fed, and his house kept scrupulously clean by Abel Hardy, who, because he had been at the cottage, and seen the "young lady and gentleman," seemed to consider himself in a special manner their acquaintance and friend; and so was very fond of their bird; and besides all his other good offices towards him, would often take the little fellow on deck to enjoy the fresh air when weather permitted.

It was a day of rejoicing when this letter arrived; but

afterwards came the feeling that these were the last tidings that must be expected till the dear writer came home again.

Meanwhile Mrs. Armstrong had taken the only way that is ever effectual to enable us to bear a separation from those we love with any kind of firmness. She was never idle for a moment. She was so highly educated that she required no aid from masters for Margaret, so that six or eight hours daily were devoted to teaching her. Two hours more they both gave to teaching in a school in which they took an interest. Gardening, walking, and reading, filled up the rest of the time. Margaret was very happy, and the days passed more quickly than her mother would have been able to believe some months ago. Her saddest thoughts were now caused by anxiety, shared with all who were interested in Captain Collinson's expedition; and many a time she feared that poor John would never return. Edward was at a more hopeful age; but he, as well as Margaret, would often long for John back.

Edward had returned to them from Aberdeen, after seeing his father off, so changed, that sometimes Mrs. Armstrong herself, though she understood the cause, could scarcely realize his present state. He had always been a fine, good-tempered, good-hearted fellow, but so idle, that when he left Dr. Truman's to come home, that gentleman confidentially advised that Greek and Latin should be given up in his case as hopeless; that, as to mathematics, though he had a head for them, he had, as yet, made no progress in them, for want of the necessary attention; and that, in short, the only school in which he would excel would be one where the examinations were in cricketing, rowing, swimming, and climbing, in all of which he was a proficient, unless, indeed, he proved to have a genius for drawing, for

that all his copy-books were full of sketches, and the time he ought to spend over his exercises was given to taking views or making caricatures.

During the year that he was under his father, he had, however, so far belied this report, that he had faithfully performed every task set him, and given his utmost attention to every lesson; and as he was very clever, he made good progress. This he did because he was so very fond of his father. Every word his father spoke was a law to Edward; everything he did together with his father, even if it was construing a page of Latin, was a pleasure to him, and, therefore, to work under his father was no effort. As to his drawing, Captain Armstrong saw enough to believe that his genius lay there, but only allowed him to pursue it at present as an amusement, being fearful of committing the mistake of supposing a boyish fancy was a real talent, and knowing there was plenty of time before him.

After the parting, however, which had been such a severe trial to him, a great change came over Edward. He suddenly seemed to grow two years older. His habits were entirely altered. He worked very hard. He was never in bed after four or five in the morning, so that before the eight o'clock breakfast he had had two or three hours' study, and his walk of two miles to Dr. Truman's afterwards was always begun in time to take him there exactly at nine. He was at the head of most of his classes, and astonished Dr. Truman very much indeed. The fact was, that everything his father had said to him, every wish he had expressed, every hope he had seemed to indulge, Edward recollected, and to be and to do exactly what those words, wishes, and hopes aimed at, became the aim of his life. His early rising and work in the morning were entirely

caused by his desire not only to do what his father wished at Dr. Truman's, but to try to be a comfort and pleasure to his mother and sister; and when he returned to them in the evening, he was enabled to devote himself entirely to them. In the evenings they walked, read, and enjoyed music, as they used to do; and when Margaret, who was always on the watch, cried out, "Here comes Edward!" and bounded off with Trident to meet him, a gladness seemed to come over the house. Saturday, when he had a half-holiday, and dined with them, and Sunday, when he was with them all day, they called their "feast-days." Every Saturday afternoon that weather allowed, they made some long walking excursion; Edward sometimes bringing a schoolfellow or two with him, or if not, indulging himself with some sketching; and in the evening Mrs. Armstrong often invited little parties, when they had dancing or games. She tried to avoid letting any of the sadness that she was herself conscious of darken the lives of her children. But it was seldom that Edward had his father out of his thoughts.

It was one Saturday afternoon in October that they were setting off for a long walk, accompanied as usual by Trident, when Margaret said, "Here comes a lame old man leaning on a stick up the Drive; who can it be?"

"I cannot think," said Edward. "I do not know him at all. Down, Trident! Keep close."

"He sees us," said Margaret, "and has taken off his hat to us, as if he knew us; and now he is leaning against a tree, as if he could not walk."

"That is not an old head," said Mrs. Armstrong. "Surely I should know that light curly hair. Is it possible? Can it be John Armstrong?"

Edward darted forward at the words, and they soon saw him meet the stranger, and shake hands heartily. They hurried on, and Edward running back to meet them, exclaimed, "It is John, and they have found the north-west passage!"

Mrs. Armstrong had soon reached the poor shattered sailor, who, however thin and lame he might be, had still the merry look they knew so well, and held out both his hands to receive her affectionate welcome.

"John, my dear John, welcome home! How many anxious thoughts have we had about you! I am so happy to see you once more!"

"And I am delighted to see you, and to be back in old England once more. Why, Edward and Maggie are grown out of all knowledge! and how well they both look!" and here there was a round of shaking hands and rejoicing.

"But what have you been about? How is it you come back so ill?" asked Mrs. Armstrong, anxiously.

"Oh, I am a perfect beauty to what I was three months ago. The voyage home has quite set me up. Three winters in the ice are not exactly invigorating, but I shall soon be well again. Don't be anxious about me. I should not have been so ill but for an unlucky sprain which prevented me from walking, and to be prevented from taking vigorous exercise at forty below zero is no joke."

"But is it true? Did I really hear Edward rightly? Have you found the north-west passage?"

"We have. Captain M'Clure has the honour of solving that long-sought problem."

"It's glorious news!" cried Edward. "How glad I am it was your ship that did it! Is Captain M'Clure come home safe, and has the good old 'Investigator' escaped pretty easily out of her battles with the ice?"

"I hope Captain M'Clure will come home safe and well, but as to the good old 'Investigator,' her battles are all over. She is left enclosed in the ice, and M'Clure is on board the 'Resolute,' with all our ship's company, except a few of us who returned under Lieutenant Cresswell with his despatches in the 'Phoenix.'"

"I will not allow another question," said Mrs. Armstrong, "till you have come in with us and rested. I know Edward was just going to say, 'where is the passage?' but you must not now, Edward. One question only I must ask, and yet I know I need not; I know you would have told us instantly."

"You mean, have we any tidings of Franklin? No, oh, no!" said John, his merry voice becoming sad in a moment: "we only found out where he had not been by the astonishment of the natives at the sight of white men and a ship."

"Now, take my arm, John, lean on me, and come in to your own home, dear John."

"Do you know," said he, "that though I do long to be in that dear home again, yet I should like very much to lie down here at the root of this birch-tree, among the ferns. You cannot imagine what a delight the greenness, the grass, and flowers, and trees, are to me. It all looks like Paradise! it *is* Paradise! and only fancy my being actually too tired at this minute to feel able to walk that little bit that lies between us and the door. Two years ago I thought nothing of forty miles a day. Do sit down, all of you, by me, and let us rest here. The air feels fresh, though it is too hot; but I should have been dead if I had stayed another night in London."

"Then you arrived yesterday?"

"Only last night; too late to come off here directly."

At a word from Mrs. Armstrong, Margaret and Edward ran off to the house, and soon returned with a tray covered with some refreshment. Margaret had only bargained in a whisper that her mamma would not let John talk, for she did not want to miss anything he told, and in truth he only occupied the time in asking questions about his uncle. He had heard in London that the "Pole-Star" had sailed. In the midst of their conversation they found that Margaret and Edward had begun spreading the luncheon among the ferns.

The sight alone of fruit, apples, pears, and grapes, and of a salad, seemed to refresh John at once. Having eaten something of everything they offered him, intermixed with a hundred questions about home affairs, for he declared he felt like a man risen from the dead, and wanted to know about all sorts of things, public and private, he ended by pronouncing a rhapsody over a bunch of grapes which he stripped to the last grape, Margaret laughing heartily, and he laughing in chorus, and then exclaimed that he only wished every poor fellow that came from a long voyage could have such a welcome as he had had.

"But you look so tired, John," said Mrs. Armstrong, "your eyes are half shut."

"I am very sleepy. I never closed my eyes in that hot room in the hotel in London last night. Let me sleep here for an hour or two, and then I will come in with you as fresh as a lark."

"But you will catch cold, for whatever you may say about heat, it is a cold autumn day."

"Cold! what, a man used to sleep on the snow under a tent, with his wet boots for a pillow, catch cold among

the ferns and heather! Call me in two or three hours! Good-night!" And he was asleep in a moment.

"We must take great care of him," said Mrs. Armstrong, looking at him as he lay, "and make him well and strong, if we can. We must not leave him here alone. Let us have an afternoon of gardening instead of our walk; there is plenty to do."

So hoes, rakes, and spades, were brought out, and they worked very busily till it was time to get ready for dinner, and then awoke the sleeper. He opened his eyes, said he was glad to find he was still there, and that it was not all a dream; shook hands again with them all round, and then went in with them.

His raptures began over again in the cottage; only he said, that though the windows were all open, the heat was dreadful, but he supposed he should soon learn to bear it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

WHEN evening had come and the lamp was lighted, and John, stretched on a sofa, and thoroughly rested and refreshed, had pretty nearly exhausted his questions and heard all the news that they could tell him, he took a pen-and-ink chart out of his pocket, and said he would show them the famous passage.

"Here is our course," said he, "by Cape Horn and Behring's Straits. We sent letters home from Kotzebue Sound, and also by the 'Herald.'"

"Those we received," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"We crossed the Arctic Circle on the 29th of July, 1850, and first saw the ice extending ahead of us when we got into Behring's Straits."

"Did you see the herds of walruses Captain Cook tells of?" asked Edward.

"Indeed, we did! Enormous numbers of them were on the ice-fields, basking in the sun. Great monsters with long tusks, and females with their cubs, making the strangest gambols. The men had loaded a gun and were going to fire upon them, but M'Clure was so struck and affected by the loving feeling of the mothers and children that he forbade them."

"I am so glad of that," cried Margaret; "I never can think why men like to kill creatures whenever they see them happy and wild."

"And the walrus is not at all a ferocious creature. It is quite harmless unless attacked, and feeds on the plants that grow in the sea. But the Esquimaux must attack them for their own subsistence. To them the flesh, oil, skin, and tusks of the walrus are all valuable."

"Well, at any rate, Captain M'Clure was very kind."

"So he was, Maggie. You must understand we had already parted company with the 'Enterprise.' Captain Collinson is likely to bring her home again by Cape Horn, I hear."

"What! though the north-west passage is found!" said Edward.

"Wait a bit, and you will hear how that is," replied John. "Now find Cape Barrow, the north-west extreme point of America. We rounded that cape at midnight, about ten miles from the coast, and turned our faces home-

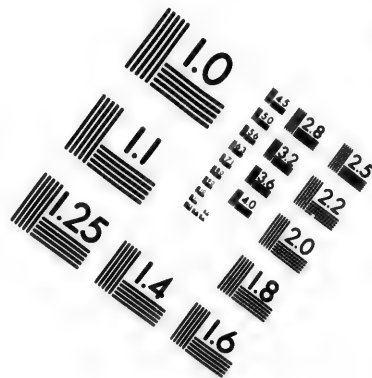
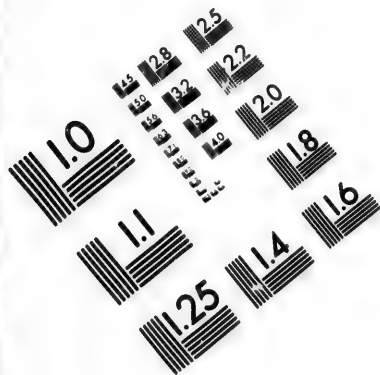
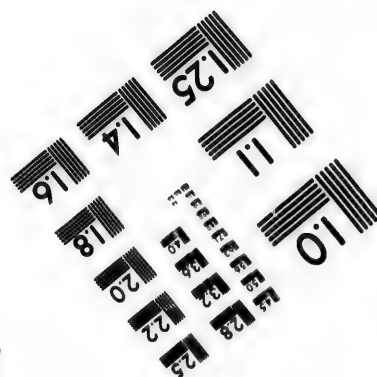
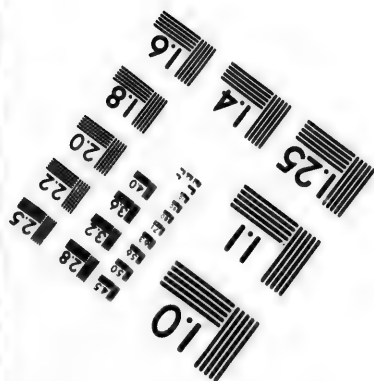
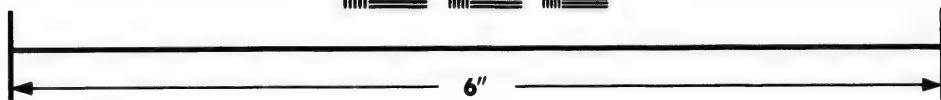
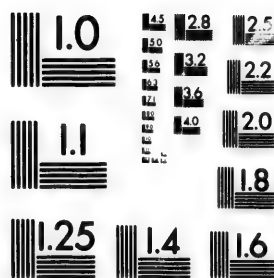


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ward. The 'Investigator' was the first ship that had entered the Arctic Sea by Behring's Straits."

"That is one good thing," said Margaret, at which John had a good fit of laughing.

"We thought so too, Maggie," said he. "We were in a state of great excitement, I can assure you, and every mile of easting that we made the merrier were we. The sailors were just the same. Loud songs and cheers rang over the ice. There it lay before us, a waste of ice as far as the eye could see in the direction of Melville Island."

"Just like Parry's account of his sailing westward," said Edward. "I suppose you got to where he stopped, that is what I expect to hear."

"Wait a minute! you sail too fast, Master Edward. We had to struggle on our course through such difficulties as are not mastered very quickly. We kept very near the coast, sailing through the land water—a shallow lane of water between the coast and the ice-line."

"How wide is it?" asked Edward.

"It varies from a few yards to a mile. The ice is of immense thickness, twenty or thirty feet at least, and the open water, narrow as it is, is encumbered besides with floating pieces. I have known the ships tremble in every timber, and groan as we struck against them in the dense fogs that prevail there. In this way we sailed on till we were nearly in the longitude of Melville Island, but quite five degrees to the south. What lay between we did not know. I have missed out numbers of adventures, storms, meeting with Esquimaux, and all manner of things. I want to go straight on to the discovery of the passage, you know."

"Yes, but you will tell us all the rest afterwards," said

Margaret. "We shall have plenty of talk for the winter evenings."

"We soon found we had land on the north. We named it Baring Land, but afterwards we found it was the southern point of the same island—for island it is—that Parry named Banks' Land, seeing as he did its northern coast."

"Yes, I see it here on your chart," said Edward.

"We sailed up this strait that you see here, and named it Prince of Wales' Strait. Now began our excitement."

"To be sure: you were getting quite near the point where Parry wintered."

"We knew that we were only sixty miles from Melville Sound, communicating with Barrow Strait. Only one week more of open water, and we should find the north-west passage."

"Ah, but you could not be sure that the strait was not closed in by land, and would turn out to be only a sound or inlet of the sea."

"We could not be sure, but everything looked like the contrary. The north-west wind brought the heavy sea-ice drifting down upon us, that was one sign."

"And did you get through?"

"We endured such battering among that same sea-ice as I could give you no idea of, if I had time even. M'Clure bore it all without flinching. The wind blew from the south. On we went, churning through a drifting sea of ice, amidst darkness and snow. No matter, so that it was towards the north-east. To go into harbour for the winter only sixty miles from Melville Sound was a thing not to be thought of. On the 23rd of September, however, the wind increased to a gale, we were beset in the pack, and drifted

on helplessly with the ice. You know the meaning of my ice-language, I think?"

"Yes, yes," said Edward. "We know that to be 'beset in the pack' means to be caught fast in the great mass of loose ice extending beyond one's sight."

"The furious gale drove the pack and our ship with it towards the high cliffs of an island we saw before us; they were four hundred feet high. There was nothing to be done; we were powerless."

Edward remembered his father once saying, when they were talking of shipwrecks and dreadful danger by sea and land, "When you are powerless, remember that you are in His hand, whose power and love are infinite, and endure with patience and courage to the end."

"How did the crew bear it?" he asked.

"Not a man looked pale or lost courage; all stood on deck, facing those cliffs. I heard what two of the sailors said at one moment: 'It looks a bad job this time,' said one. 'Yes,' answered the other, shading his eyes from the driving snow, and looking steadily at the dark cliffs looming through it, 'the old craft will double up like an old basket when she gets alongside of those rocks.'"

"Oh, John, go on!" said Margaret.

"Onward we drove; we were only five hundred yards from the cliffs; we could hear the sea-birds on them screaming; when, instead of the crash we expected, we were carried on by the tide that set round their base, and swept—or *coach-wheeled*, as the sailors call it—past the island."

"It was a wonderful escape," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"It was, and this day reconciled M'Clure to lay up the ship for the winter. It was very trying, but yet we were

all glad when, after some severe nips, in which every timber groaned and cracked, and the bells began to ring with the surging and trembling, we finally settled down in the ice."

"Well, then, when did you discover the passage?"

"After the ship was safely housed in for the winter, and everything had shaken into its regular order—and very well and very happy we were, I assure you—Captain M'Clure started with a sledge-party to the northward, overland. It was on the 21st October, the thermometer below zero, and the travelling very difficult over rough ice and through deep, drifted snow. We pitched our tent at night, and rested content with a little frozen pemmican and some melted snow."

"What is pemmican?" asked Margaret.

"Edward knows, as he saw his father's stores, I dare say. It is a compound of meat, with the fat, but without bones, pressed together firmly, and much used for long voyages, from containing so much nourishment in little space. Do you understand, Maggie?"

Margaret said she did, and that she wanted him to go on.

"It took us five days of this travelling to reach the foot of a hill that we had long looked to as a landmark, and expected we should be able to make our observations from."

"But could you not get to its top?"

"Not that night. We were obliged to halt there, and pitch our tent. You must remember we had but little daylight now. The sun only rose a few degrees above the horizon, and soon sank again. But before sunrise next morning, M'Clure, with a small party, began the ascent of the hill. It was the 26th of October. We reached the top, and patiently waited for the increase of light. As the

sun rose, the panorama was slowly unveiled: the coast of Banks' Land ended about twelve miles from where we stood, and then turned away to the north-west; away to the north lay the frozen waters of Melville Strait, bounded to the north by Melville Island. There was no land between—nothing but the hills and dales of blue crystalline ice described by Parry. We had reached the sea where he stopped. The north-west passage was discovered!"

"What did you feel? what did you do?" asked Edward.

"I think there was a low, fervent sound, like 'Thank God!' that rose from among us."

"It was a worthy moment for thankfulness," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"And did all the men come on?" asked Margaret.

"They did, and we went on altogether to the north-east point of the island; M'Clure named it Cape Lord John Russell. There we encamped for the night. As we reached the shore of Melville Strait the men cheered lustily; they lighted a bonfire—a miniature one, certainly, made of a broken sledge and some dwarf willow—and had an extra glass of grog. Next morning we built a cairn, hoisted the English flag on it, buried a record of our visit under it, and turned homewards—I mean shipwards."

"I suppose you had a warm welcome when you got there with your good news?"

"You may be sure of that, and very welcome and warm we found the good ship too. Poor old 'Investigator!' It is sad to think of her lying there deserted now!"

"I cannot let you think or talk more to-night, John," said Mrs. Armstrong. "Take him up to his room, Edward. I only fear we have let him tell us too much."

"I will obey, for I do feel rather tired. Mind I must have my window wide open, and no blankets. Good-night! I can hardly believe I am going to sleep at home once more."

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESCUE.

It was several days before John was able to leave his room. His happiness at first had made him appear better than he really was. But the good nursing he received, and the cheerful evenings with Edward, who always sat by him, after he came in, soon began to have a good effect on him, and by the Saturday that ended the week he was able to take a short walk in the woods, often stopping to rest. His delight with the wide views of the country, and the exclamations he would sometimes make at the beauty of the commonest wild flower, made them understand, better than any description could have done, what a dreary scene he had been accustomed to look upon for the last three years.

When they were returning, and taking their last rest within sight of the cottage-roof which rose among the trees, John declared that he had found such a delightful bed among the heather, and such a soft log for a pillow, that if they would indulge him by sitting still for a little longer he would reward them by telling, what he knew Margaret in especial was full of curiosity to know, how he managed to get home, and why he felt so comfortable about Captain

M'Clure and his crew, though the poor "Investigator" could not bring them.

"Oh, thank you, John!" cried Margaret; "I made Edward promise he would not let you tell him without mamma and me, and I know he has kept his word. But before you begin I want to ask you one question: did you keep Christmas-day?"

"Yes, we did, every year—even our last dreary winter. We had religious service, and we managed to make something like a feast, and to get up some games, some good stories, and good laughs."

"And did you think of us? We always thought of you, and drank your health, and wished for you safe home again."

"I did indeed! Many a time did my heart turn to you all, and to my dear home—my home since I was a boy of ten years old. I remember, as well as if it were yesterday, how your mother and father came for me to my grim old school, for which I had no fancy, and brought me away to this very cottage we see there among the trees, and never let me go again except to my ships, and always welcomed me back from every voyage. I remember thinking Uncle Henry had married the most beautiful and the sweetest lady in all the world. No orphan-boy had such a home as I had, I believe. But, Maggie, I will go on with my story now: you know I left off in Prince of Wales' Strait; we never moved till July of next summer."

"We are in '51 now," said Edward.

"The year of the Great Exhibition in London, and such a fine warm summer! What a contrast to yours!"

"Contrast enough! We had drifted to within twenty-five miles of Melville Sound, but there we found the

impenetrable pack ice extending from shore to shore. It was vain to hope to get through it, so M'Clure made up his mind at once. The helm was put up; the good ship wore round upon her keel, set all sail, and sped rapidly to the south-west before the wind, to round the southern shore of Banks' Land, pass up its western coast, and enter Melville Sound by its northern coast. We had a splendid run, with six miles width of clear water on the southern shore, always seeing the great ice-field beyond. This lasted till we changed our course to the north; but I can give you no idea of the stupendous nature of the west coast of Banks' Land. The ice drew from forty to fifty feet water—I mean, it was forty or fifty feet thick below the water—and sometimes a hundred above it. The cliffs, on the other hand, were precipices of four or five hundred feet in height; between these we sailed. The lane of water had diminished to two hundred yards, sometimes much less. Once the quarter-boats had to be topped up, to prevent them touching one or the other. Once the lower studding-sail boom had to be topped up for the same reason. We reached the north-west point of the island, however, after a narrow enough escape, and there we were beset: there was not room to drop a lead-line down round the vessel, and the copper upon her bottom was hanging in shreds or rolled up like brown paper."

"You had had a battle with the ice, indeed!"

"Yes; I fancy Sebastopol is not harder to conquer. We used to make excursions ashore while we were beset, and among other things we found that there had been great forests of trees there once: portions of them, chiefly fossilized, appeared in the ravines in whole layers."

"How very curious!" said Edward. "Does anything grow there now?"

"Large tracts are covered with the moss on which rein-deer feed. There are some coarse grasses, and here and there anemones, sorrel, poppies, and saxifrage. Willow and birch are found, but certainly not of very splendid growth; some of them may reach the height of five inches."

"John, you are laughing at us!"

"No, indeed, it is quite true. The fossil trees were not very large; we measured some, about a foot and a half in diameter, but there may be larger, that we did not see. It will perhaps set learned people speculating to think at what time the climate was mild enough to grow them. They were extremely hard and heavy."

"And were there many animals?"

"Immense herds of deer and musk-oxen; and contrary to usual experience in the Arctic regions, they did not migrate southward in winter."

"That will surprise people, too," said Edward.

"We saw numbers of ptarmigan also, and I must not forget the fish. How you would have liked to see them, Maggie! We found two deep fresh-water lakes; one of them had no fish at all, the other was crowded with the prettiest little salmon-trout, and after it was frozen over we could see them as plainly as possible through the beautiful transparent ice, sporting about."

"I should have liked to see them very much," said Margaret.

"Then how far did you sail? Did you get into Melville Sound? That is what I want to know," said Edward.

"We did, but we were again driven into the pack, and had such tremendous conflicts with the ice that we were

thankful to get into a safe bay on the northern coast of Banks' Land—so thankful, indeed, that M'Clure named it 'the Bay of God's Mercy.' There we lay through the winter of '51-2, and there the 'Investigator' lies still: we never got her out. In vain throughout the next summer, we looked for an opening. We employed the season in making sledge-journeys in search of Franklin. During the course of the season, also, M'Clure crossed the ice with a sledge and visited Winter Harbour, in Melville Island; he hoped to have found provisions or even a ship there, and was bitterly disappointed to find nothing."

"Did he see Parry's stone at the entrance of the harbour, ten feet high, with the names of the 'Hecla' and 'Griper' engraved on it?" asked Edward.

"Yes, and left a record of his own visit on the top of it, telling where the 'Investigator' lay, and of his discovery of the north-west passage; and thereby hangeth a tale."

"Oh! what?" cried Margaret.

"You shall hear in good time. We were now in '52 you know; and though we got abundance of fresh provisions, venison, and beef, yet many were on the sick list. The long darkness tried the men, but more than all, the disappointment at Melville Island, which caused anxiety and despondency. The winter of '52-3 came on, and then we were on short allowance, besides all else, for our captain had to provide against the chance of even a fourth winter, and to think how it would be if the ice never opened throughout the summer of '53. Our coal fell short too, and we suffered from damp as well as cold."

"Ah, you have gone through much suffering; I do not wonder at your pale face now."

"It would have gone worse with us but for the venison."

Strange to say, the deer haunted the neighbourhood of the ship. The extreme cold, the darkness—though that was relieved often by splendid moonlights and by the aurora—and our weakness, would have prevented our following them, but we had only to be out a few hours to bring in three or four. M'Clure called them our 'manna.' I have not told you of my accident and sprain; I will another time. It threw me on the sick list, with many others. When the spring of '53 came on, it was too evident that a number of us could not stand another winter. M'Clure had made up his mind not to desert his ship till forced by dire necessity, but he determined to send off his weakest hands, in hopes of their reaching home by some ship, or other aid. We were told off in two parties of fifteen each, one under Lieutenant Haswell, to journey to Griffith's Island, where he knew Captain Austin had left a boat, and in her to attempt to reach Greenland."

"Griffith's Island!" exclaimed Edward. "It is an immense journey from Mercy Bay. Sick, disabled men, to make such a journey, and then row to Greenland!"

"It was a forlorn hope," replied John; "but we had to take our choice of one forlorn hope or another. The second party was to retreat upon Princess Royal Island—that island whose cliffs we so nearly struck upon, and which we honoured with this name—we had left a depôt of provisions and a boat there in case of need. The second party, therefore, was to take this boat, load it with the provisions, and push for the Coppermine River, to the Hudson's Bay territories, and thence home."

"That sounds like an easier journey, and yet we know by Franklin's experience thirty years ago what it might be," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"Yes, we knew that ; but we said nothing to the men, and all kept up heart, though be sure that many a poor fellow as he limped about the ship with black and swollen limbs, knew full well, that though the journey would be his only chance for life, yet it was but a very poor one : and M'Clure, with those who were to remain — theirs was, perhaps, even less."

"I see you here before me, or I should despair of it altogether," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"We were to start on the 15th of April ; meanwhile, we had every care and rest and extra food to prepare and strengthen us. The first death that had occurred among us since we left England happened on the 5th. It had a bad moral effect, and our captain made an address to us that day. A brave and manly address it was. He reminded us of the difficulties mastered, the honours won, the rewards that were before us, the merciful Providence which had hitherto upheld us. He ended with these words — how often have I thought of them since ! — 'In the gloomiest hour of trial, relief may and often does come, and the darkest cloud has a silvery side.'

"It was the 6th of April ; one week before we were to start. M'Clure and the first lieutenant were walking near the ship, deliberating how to dig a grave for the poor fellow who had died, while the ground was frozen so hard, when a figure was seen rapidly walking towards them from the rough ice at the entrance of the Bay. From his pace and gestures they fancied he was one of our party pursued by a bear. Presently he began to speak and gesticulate. The high wind carried his words away and brought only wild shouts to their ears. His dress was strange and unlike ours. His face covered with a black mask. They

stood still in astonishment, and when his words reached them they seemed incredible.

“I’m Lieutenant Pim, late of the “Herald,” now of the “Resolute.” Captain Kellet is in her off Melville Island.’

“You may think how they rushed at him, and seized his hands. You may think how the news that relief had come, that our country had not forgotten us, that a stranger was among us, flew through the ship. The sick forgot their weakness, and leaped from their hammocks; the workmen dropped their tools and ran to the hatchway. Lieutenant Pim will never forget the welcome he had that day.”

“No wonder! no wonder!” said Mrs. Armstrong. Edward and Margaret had each hold of one of John’s hands. He had risen up from his heather bed and soft pillow in his excitement.

“We knew of the mission of the ‘Resolute’ and ‘Intrepid’ to look for you,” said Mrs. Armstrong, “or our anxiety would have been dreadful. It was mainly owing to Mr. Cresswell, the father of your first lieutenant, whose letter to the Admiralty succeeded in rousing the fears of Government about Captain Collinson’s expedition. My husband had also exerted himself about it the very moment he returned from his own voyage. I was glad to hear you mention the ‘Enterprise’ as likely to come home.”

“Yes, she has made some important discoveries in geography, and will arrive soon, I hope; but has heard nothing of Franklin.”

“But was Lieutenant Pim all alone? and how did he find out where you were?” asked Margaret.

“No, he was not alone. Two men came up soon after him with a dog-sledge. As to how he found us, that is my



THE RESCUE OF THE "INVESTIGATOR."

'tale.' The 'Resolute' arrived at Melville Island in the autumn of 1852, and soon afterwards a sledge party went to Winter Harbour to deposit provisions, and look out for our expedition, and the lieutenant in command found, to his joy, M'Clure's document on Parry's famous stone, telling of the discovery of the north-west passage and the position of the 'Investigator.' The moment, therefore, that spring permitted another sledge party to start, Lieutenant Pim was sent off to us. He left the 'Resolute' on the 10th of March, and reached the 'Investigator,' as I have said, on the 6th of April."

"And now, what did you do next?"

"Our captain set off back to the 'Resolute' with Pim, to confer with Captain Kellett, still determined to stand by his ship. We, the sick, were despatched in detachments, and by the aid of sledges and the abundance of food which we could now freely use, we reached the two ships in safety, and met with indescribable care and kindness; and it was not long before we were joined by M'Clure and the remainder of our crew. However much Captain Kellett might sympathize in M'Clure's desire to stand by his ship, he could not, as the superior officer, sanction it. Two more men had died; the medical officer's report was very bad; M'Clure was obliged to yield. So they landed the stores and provisions for the use of Collinson or any one else; secured the ship so as to prevent her being blown to sea in any future gale; hoisted the colours to the mast-head; and turned their backs on her as sorrowfully as you would on any well-tried friend in his adversity. Soon afterwards Lieutenant Cresswell was sent off with a sledge party to Beechey Island, where the 'Phoenix' steamer was. I accompanied him, and with him returned home in her. I

hope the two ships will soon follow us ; they only waited for the ice to break up."

"Our hearts are very grateful that you are safe with us, after all these dangers," said Mrs. Armstrong ; and then she sat silent, shading her face with her hand. She never uttered any of the sad forebodings that she felt herself ; but her thoughts had flown to him who was in the midst of dangers equally great, and in remote regions, where no ships were likely to meet with him, or rescue him, if he needed it.

The melancholy tone of John's voice as he went on seemed to echo her thoughts. "We have brought home one very sad piece of news. Bellot, the French officer, who was beloved like a brother throughout Sir Edward Belcher's squadron, is dead ; lost in a chasm of the ice."

"Oh ! how deeply grieved my husband will be for him," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"No one that knew him will ever forget him," said John. "Even the Esquimaux mourned for him. He had done them many kind offices. 'Poor Bellot !' they would say, shaking their heads. 'Poor Bellot !' "

CHAPTER X.

TRIDENT.

ON Sunday evening, John, who was beginning to get stronger every day, joined Edward and Margaret in a walk to the village, to call on Peter. He said he longed to see the old fellow again, and hear what he would say about the "Investigator" and her discovery.

Peter was sitting in his parlour, in his respectable Sunday clothes, reading his weekly paper, and came out to the gate to let them in, in a state of excitement, such as he very seldom showed, for he was very much pleased to see John, who had always been a great favourite with him.

"Come in, come in, sir!" said he; "and Master Edward and Miss Margaret. I am very glad to see you come back safe, sir; only you do look wonderful bad. Come down, Susan! Here's the lieutenant come back from the North Pole. Sit down, sir; please to sit down all. Here's cheers."

Mrs. Greely soon made her appearance, looking as nice, and fresh, and bright as possible, in her best gown and cap. She made many curtsies, and said the visit was very kind, and begged them to be seated.

"I was just reading the account of the north-west passage in the papers," said Peter. "You do look bad, though, Mr. John. Why, you're not above half the size you was when you went. I spent fifteen shillins a-week on the doctors all the first year after I come home, and you're like to do the same to all appearance."

John laughed, and said he hoped not, and asked Peter what he thought of the news?

"It's a good thing the north-west passage is found, and so we shan't have men risking their lives looking for it," said he. "As to the passage itself, what's the use of it? I don't see any, unless ships can be made to sail over ice. Perhaps we shall have some patent discovery of that kind soon."

"Well, but then, Peter, you wouldn't have given it up? Confess, now, you would have gone on trying till you made it out somehow?" said Edward.

Peter gave various grunts, but it was impossible to say exactly what they meant. Then he looked down at the lieutenant's lame foot, and said, "Frost bite, I suppose?"

"Sprain first and frost bite afterwards," replied John.

"What are they going to do for you, d'ye think, after all this?" was his next question.

"According to you, I have not done anything to deserve much of a grateful country," replied John.

"Your captain's not come home, neither, yet," said Peter. "They won't set about the reward till then. Perhaps the 'Resolute' will be froze up again. Who knows? You left her at Melville Island, they say."

"I devoutly hope she will not," said John. "But 'who knows,' Peter, as you truly observe."

They must give the reward for discovery of the north-west passage—that's a promise, you know—and your ship did it; unless, indeed, Franklin should be found, and it turns out he discovered it before you."

"And I am sure there is not a man among us who would not joyfully give it up to him, if it was a hundred times as much."

"I believe ye, sir," said Peter. "But, without any detriment to Franklin, I hope you will get a good share of it. I'm sure there's not an officer in her majesty's navy deserves it better than you."

"Thank you, Peter, heartily, for your good opinion of me."

"I'm glad, though, sir," said Peter, "you don't expect much. It's best not. When we were aboard of the 'Isabella,' I said to Barney Wood, one of our seamen, says I, 'We're all to be kings and queens when we land, you know. Now I bet you a shillin the first man we meet when

we touch English ground, will try to cheat us.' 'Done,' says Barney. Well, he and I landed at Woolwich in the steamer out of a boat with two other men. We see them pay sixpence each, so we lugged out sixpence. 'It's a shillin,' says the waterman. 'You cheating knave,' says I, 'we saw those men pay sixpence.' 'No matter,' says he; 'you owe me a shillin each.' 'What's the row?' says a lad ashore. 'We're two o' the "Victory's" crew,' says I, 'and he wants us to pay a shillin for landing us.' A crowd gathered in no time, and they began hooting and abusing the waterman; and in the midst of the confusion we cut away, and paid nothing at all."

"At all events," said Edward, "the crowd, like worthy representatives of 'a grateful country,' took your side."

"Yes, but I won my bet for all that," said Peter.

"So you did," said John. "But how happened it you landed at Woolwich? I thought the 'Isabella' was bound for Hull."

"She was, sir, but I'll tell you how that was. When we got to the Humber the officers went ashore in a steamer. We laid at anchor for the tide. Next day morning we got under weigh at four o'clock, and should have been in at seven. As we came nigh we saw every place crowded, where there was a view, to see us land; as thick as bees the people were. I should tell you, that before Captain Ross went ashore we mustered and asked him for some money. 'Oh!' says he, 'you don't want any money yet.' Well, all we wanted was to get ashore at Hull."

"I've no doubt of that," said John.

"We knew we should have been treated to anything. But, first of all, before we went ashore we thought we would have a slap-up breakfast. You see, when we first got

aboard of the 'Isabella' in Baffin's Bay, Captain Ross says to Captain Humphreys—that was the name of the captain of the 'Isabella,'—'Now,' he says, 'Captain Humphreys, I give these men to your charge and disposal.' 'Proud I am,' answered he, 'to take charge o' such a set o' men. Well, my lads,' says he, 'you as like to work may work, and you as like to play may play, and when I serve out grog to my crew I serve out grog to you all.' Three cheers at that."

"Of course," said John. "But after breakfast, what then?"

"Oh, you have not got to breakfast yet."

"What, 'twixt the cup and the lip there's many a slip,' was that it?"

"That's where it is, sir. We'd spread our table all comfortable, when the London steamer came alongside. Some one sings out, 'Here's a steamer! Come up and have a look at the London steamer.' She popped up alongside and demanded sixteen of the 'Victory's' crew. There was a death blow!"

"Then you did not like to go to London?" asked Margaret.

"No, no, miss. It was at Hull we wanted to land. The people was like bees, as I said before, waiting for us. Well, the 'Isabella' was lashed astarn of the steamer, and we were handed over the stern and off we went. The men put our luggage into the boat and sent it aboard, and gave us three cheers, which we returned."

"It was rather hard, too," said Edward.

"And you had had no breakfast either, after all the trouble of getting it," said Margaret, looking reproachfully at John, who was laughing.

"As soon as we parted I says to our steward, 'Now, Bill, what do you think o' this? Here we are! no money in our pockets, and no breakfast!' 'It's a bad job,' says he. Well, it was a job I couldn't sanction nohow. So I takes off my cap and goes round the deck to the passengers, and says, "'Victory's" crew!' and I think I collected sixteen shillins. I called all our men together and showed them how much. Then we called the steward o' the steamer, and asked him if he couldn't accommodate us with some breakfast. Ham and beef; quart o' rum; dozen o' stout; dozen o' ale."

"Well done, Peter!" said John.

"He says, 'I've some news to tell ye. Captain Ross called at our office last night, and he left £2 for each man, and said that was to pay your passage to London, and keep you for a few days; but the steamboat company, taking into consideration the hardships we had endured, they had given us a free passage to London, and he was to supply us with provisions at cost price.' At this handsome conduct we gave three cheers. This roused the ship. All the passengers came forward to see us, and mighty civil they were."

"Well, come," said John, "you got on pretty well after all."

"Captain Ross," said Peter, "had three dinners provided for *him* at Hull, where he went and showed hisself, and then he posted to London and dined with the king."

"No, no, Peter; I think he was presented to the king," said John.

"Oh, well, it may be so. I want to ask you some questions, sir, about this account of your voyage in the papers, if you will be so good as explain about it."

"I will, with the greatest pleasure," replied John. "I'll call again soon, and tell you anything you want to hear, but we must go now. It's getting late."

"Good evening, sir, then, and thank you for coming; and the same to you, Master Edward, and Miss Margaret."

"Yes, I'm sure," said Mrs. Greely, "and I wish you better soon, sir."

"Old Greely has always a great deal of truth on his side in his dry remarks," said John, as they walked away. "Everybody at home is thinking too much about the Crimean war to care much about discoveries in the Arctic seas, I fancy."

"They do care," said Margaret, indignantly. "I am sure it would be a great shame if they did not."

"So it would, Maggie. Only think of Peter having taught me to grumble! What a fine dog that is of yours! What has become of poor old Nep? I have been on the point of asking after him a dozen times, but we have had so much to talk of that I never have."

"Poor old fellow, he died last year," said Edward.

"And where did you get this one? This is a finer dog than Neptune was."

"I am sure you will laugh, John, when you hear," said Margaret.

"I'll tell you how it was," said Edward. "When Sir Hugh lived at the Cedars—before he went to Aberdeen, you know—he had a favourite Newfoundland called Chloe, who had three puppies and then died."

"We were so sorry," said Margaret, "and so was Sir Hugh."

"He had the puppies brought up by hand," continued Edward, "and great care taken of them. We often used

to go and see them, and Nep always went with us, and he took the most extraordinary affection for them; he used to lick them all over, and when they began to run about, would lie down and let them play with his tail, and bite his ears, and jump about him. At last he took to trotting off to Sir Hugh's by himself, and staying there for a good while with them."

"Yes, and he used to lead them out on the lawn there," added Margaret, "and look after them when they played about; and if you had seen how fierce he was if any stranger came near them! And if any other dog showed his face, he was soon sent off."

"I can exactly fancy Nep guarding them," said John. "He was certainly a most original old fellow."

"Well, the very evening that my father came home from his last voyage," continued Edward, again, "Nep disappeared after dinner, and presently made his appearance at the drawing-room window, looking very important, wagging his tail slowly and with dignity, and behind him stood the three puppies, all staring in with their round, wide-opened eyes, and wagging their little scrubby tails. He waited till we had patted and praised him, and petted his adopted children as long as he thought proper; then he led them home again, and came back to attend to his duties here. After this, they were continually coming up and wandering about the wood with Nep, he teaching them to scratch about, and letting them play while he watched."

"And is this fine fellow one of Nep's adopted sons?"

"Yes; and I'll tell you how he got his funny name," said Margaret. "Edward said, that very first day when they came to the window, 'Why, Neptune, so you've got your Trident now!' So we always used to say when

we saw them, 'Here comes Nep with his Trident.' Well, John, one of the poor little things died of the distemper. Nep pined about it very much. He really did. Didn't he, Eddy?"

"Oh, I'm sure he did."

"We used to say, 'Poor Nep! you've lost one prong of your Trident,' and he quite understood."

"I don't at all mean to say he died of grief," Edward went on, "but certain it is that he had a fit, poor fellow, not long after, and though we did all we possibly could to save him, he died."

"Poor old Nep! Then Sir Hugh gave you this fine fellow to console you, I suppose?"

"Yes, and we called him Trident. His sister, the other puppy, Sir Hugh kept for himself, and called her Chloe, after her mother, and took her away to Aberdeen with him. She's quite black, and very handsome, they say."

"Well, I think poor old Nep showed great kindness of heart, and wonderful sentiment, too."

"Yes, we were very sorry at his death," said Margaret. "We buried him in the wood, and planted a silver fir on his grave. We will show it to you when you like, but here we are at home, and I dare say you will be glad to go in and rest; besides, tea is ready, and there is mamma at the window looking for us."

CHAPTER XI.

SIR HUGH ARMSTRONG.

THE winter that followed was unusually severe. The snow lay on the ground for five weeks. John would not suffer

his aunt to draw the inference that it must, therefore, be unusually severe in the Arctic regions, or she would certainly have done so. He assured her that we know nothing about that, and that it was quite impossible to judge by weather here what it might be there. John enjoyed the cold, and got better rapidly. Indeed, he had not been two months at home before he recovered his lameness, and began to look like himself again. Edward, too, seemed to enjoy the cold; at least, so most people used to say who observed how he went on. He continued his habit of bathing and swimming in the river near the cottage every morning, even when he had to break the ice at the edge. He kept his window open all night, and cared little whether the study fire was lighted or no while he prepared his lessons. No weather, rain, snow, or storm, prevented his going to Dr. Trueman's, and when the half-year's report was made up he was found to be the only student who had never missed one day's attendance. His character in every other respect was high. Even in Latin, which used to be his bane, the result of the examination was "Good" written against his name. It must be allowed, however, that if the examination had been in snow-balling, sliding, and skating, the word would have been "Excellent."

But it was not that Edward had acquired a new taste for ice and snow, frosty wind, and freezing water. He had a secret purpose in this process of hardening himself. "If you had been one year older you might have borne it," he said to himself, repeating his father's words. "My father would not think I was wrong to go the voyage next spring even; the following one he would quite approve of it, and if I harden myself to bear cold, not only this winter but next, I am sure I could stand it well." A dread, which

some people would call a presentiment, but which was, in truth, only the necessary consequence of his knowledge of the nature of the Arctic regions, and of the dangers John had escaped from—a dread that his father would not return throughout the next season had taken possession of him, and he had resolved that if it really turned so he would find some means of following when the next spring came round, and rescuing this dear father, if God permitted. To wait through the second winter would be a dreadful time, but it was impossible to help it. He must not risk a third winter in the ice; that was certain. The other alternative, the idea that his father would be lost, he drove away with horror. “If by the end of next season he is not heard of, I will go and find him,” that was his fixed determination.

His mother alone had guessed his secret, but she said nothing. The conflict in her heart was too severe for words. If in the attempt to rescue her husband she had to risk her son, now dearer than ever to her, what a hard trial awaited her! But she was prepared to meet it. She knew that when the time came, if come it must, she should speed him on his way.

Edward employed himself during the Christmas vacation in training Trident to draw a sledge. Every one but Edward’s mother thought this was only an amusement, but she knew well that it was another part of his plan. “He is right,” thought she. “A faithful dog like Trident may do some great service. He shall go too.” Many a time her eyes were dimmed with tears while she watched the merry party careering along; Margaret, seated in the pretty little light sledge, wrapped up warmly, while Trident pulled with a good will, and Edward ran full speed by the side, teaching him to obey according to the word of com-



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mand. Right! left! halt! walk! trot! gallop! hurrah!! At this last word Edward was left far behind, for Trident went full speed, and Margaret's voice was sometimes heard trying to make him attend to the order of "halt!" In this way they travelled miles over the snowy roads.

The sledge was a masterpiece of Peter's art, assisted by Edward, who worked hard under him to get it finished, and was so afraid of a thaw coming, that he rather avoided conversation, so that Peter's stories were often cut short. Still he told a good many while they went on together, and often regretted that he had not any of his curiosities and specimens to amuse Miss Margaret with while she stood by watching their progress. Peter said he could "beat the Captain with specimens," because he had his tools, and the Esquimaws would give him anything he liked for tools. "This old chisel, now," said he, as he cut away at the wood with it, "would have been worth a Jew's eye to them. But, then, what was the good of all I got? Everything had to be left behind. We had quite enough weight to pull without loading ourselves with curiosities."

When the sledge was finished it was ornamented, by Mrs. Armstrong's hands, with scarlet bows and little bells, after the manner of the Swedish sledges, and Trident had a neat white leather harness, a breast collar of flat leather, and a pair of traces, all set off to full advantage by his long glossy black hair.

Christmas-day was drawing near. One morning, while the snow glittered in the sun, the sledge was skimming merrily up the Drive homewards, Margaret singing in the joy of her heart, Edward scampering behind, Trident bounding along at full speed, when a carriage laden with luggage was seen a little way before them approaching the

door. Trident began to bark, as if inquiring what strangers might be invading his territory, and at the noise a lady's head appeared out of one of the windows looking back at them, and an old gentleman's at the other.

"Aunt Mary and Sir Hugh!" cried Margaret, joyfully; and the whole party arrived at once at the door, Edward panting for breath after his run, and both he and Margaret bright and rosy with the frosty air and exercise.

"Well done! well done! capital! Lapland indeed! pines, snow, and sledges! How d'ye do? Glad to see you both looking so well—famously well! My dear boy! my dear little niece! let me see, how is it? I feel like your uncle at all events, my dear"—all these words did Sir Hugh say while he shook Edward by the hand, kissed Margaret, patted her head, laughed, and half cried too in the warmth and kindness of his heart.

Aunt Mary's greeting was more quiet, but very affectionate, and most affectionately returned; and now out came John, and there was another round of greetings, fresh shaking of hands and congratulations, and then they all entered the hall and met Mrs. Armstrong, who seemed as happy as all the rest.

"My dear Constance," said Sir Hugh, holding her hands very kindly in both his, "you have taken care of everybody but yourself. Here is John, almost looking like himself again, instead of what I expected. Oh! upon my word I heard such accounts I was almost afraid to look in his face. And as to Edward and Margaret, they are pictures of health. Capital! famous! But you are pale and thin, my dear. I'm come to spend Christmas with you, and look after you, and see how they treat you. A merry Christmas to you all my dears; and we'll drink

'absent friends' with all our hearts. Mary and I only thought of it last week, so we made up our minds to start, and here we are you see."

A gruff bark was now heard at the door. It was like Trident's, but it was not his.

"Ah, there's Chloe!" said Sir Hugh. "May she come in, my dear? My servant has brought her up from the station."

Chloe was admitted in a moment, and received with many pats and caresses.

"Thought you would like to see her again," said Sir Hugh, "so I brought her, and my servant will take charge of her, and not let her do any mischief."

"Oh, we like to have her very much," cried Margaret; while Edward inwardly determined to teach Chloe to draw with Trident and get a double harness. As he thought so, Trident himself entered, to see what was going on, having just been unharnessed, and commenced so boisterous a salutation of his sister that Edward was obliged to open the window and let them both out on the lawn, when they very soon converted the white smooth surface of the snow into a well-ploughed-up confusion. After touching noses, staring in each other's eyes with upraised ears and wagging tails, starting, whirling round and round each other, and then staring face to face again, rushing round the whole circuit of the fence side by side, then again taking another good stare, they quieted down, and finally appeared at the window, each with a red tongue hanging out. Had it been a brother instead of a sister that had come, Trident's reception of him would not have been so good-natured, but dogs never fight with their lady friends and relations.

Edward, who had watched their performances with much amusement, while the rest of the party were talking and the travellers were being conducted to their rooms, now took them both to have a good dinner and draught of water, for which they were equally ready. In the kitchen he found Sir Hugh's servant, and saw that it was Mark, Peter's eldest son, that had come.

"Why, Mark!" he cried, "how glad your father and mother will be to see you. So you have left the sea and turned valet?"

"Not exactly, sir," said Mark, touching his hat. "I'm only taking a rest ashore, and shall very likely go out in a Greenalman next season."

Mark was on the point of starting for his father's cottage, so Edward did not stop him, except to help him up with a heavy basket on his shoulder.

"It's good Scotch beef and a turkey for their Christmas dinner," said he. "Sir Hugh's a gennelman to the backbone, so I say. Good-day to ye, sir. Any message to the old people?"

"Only to wish them a merry Christmas."

When Edward returned to the drawing-room he found Sir Hugh alone there. "Come here, my boy," cried he. "I like you. You've a good face, like your father, and a frank English smile. I tell you, you are not to go to sea. Don't take a fancy to be a sailor. There are quite enough of the Armstrongs perilling their lives on the ocean. Your father—nothing else would serve him but to be a sailor. Then there was John next. Now you hear me, you must not want to be a sailor."

"I don't want to be a sailor, Sir Hugh."

"That's right. Anything else you like."

Edward began to look grave. If Sir Hugh took a decided objection to his going to sea, it might prove an obstacle to him if he should have to go to the rescue of his father. It would be to Sir Hugh he must look in such a case to help him out. But it was too soon to think of this. His father might be home safely with them next autumn. Now that everything looked so bright and cheerful round him, and Edward felt in such good spirits, he felt as if this happy hope would be realized, and as if he was wrong to be so desponding as he often was.

Just then his mother came in. "Why, Sir Hugh," she cried, "have you the genius of the lamp at your service? I went to the larder just now with the cook, and was lost in astonishment at the sight I saw."

"Only some offerings from the Land o' Cakes, my dear," said Sir Hugh; "and whoever says it's not a land of plenty and good cheer, knows nothing about it. It's merry Christmas time, you know, and it would never have done to come empty-handed."

The visit so kindly and pleasantly begun went on well to its conclusion. Sir Hugh was on the watch to discover what he could do to make them all happy, and was made happy himself by the affection they all showed him. He was very fond of young people, and never so well pleased as when he was surrounded by them, and he now declared that in a year or two he should carry out the plan he had long talked of, and should retire from business altogether, and come and settle near them again; "for when Harry comes home—your father, I mean," said he—"I shall want to be among you." Meanwhile, he said, they must pay him a visit in Aberdeen, and see his granite palace, as he called it. Everything, he told them, was granite there.

Granite quarries, granite works ; churches, bridges, houses, pavement, everything granite. It would be a good plan to come down and live with him there all the summer, till Harry brought home the "Pole-Star."

Sir Hugh reminded Mrs. Armstrong of her half promise to agree to his proposal when the last morning of his visit came round.

"If Harry comes back without any tidings of Franklin," he added, "and if none of the ships now out on the search can find him, I must learn to forget—no, not to forget my old friend, but to give up the hope I still feel. And we will not let Harry go to sea again. No, no, my dear Constance, we must keep him at home when once we get him back."

Chloe went home with her master, but she had learned to draw the sledge with Trident perfectly well. Everybody was sorry to bid good-bye. Sir Hugh loaded them with presents before he went, and, what pleased them more than all, left a large sum of money to assist the poor labourers and their families, whom the long frost was trying severely. Grateful and affectionate thoughts followed him on his way. He left Aunt Mary for a few weeks longer with them, at Mrs. Armstrong's earnest request. John and Edward saw him off, and his last words as he got into the railway carriage were, "Edward, you must not wish to go to sea."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MESSENGER.

THE old ways began again after Sir Hugh had left them. The cottage seemed very silent without him, and Chloe,

and Mark. John often had to go to London on business, and when he was away it was more silent still. The snow had melted; the sledge was laid by; Edward went to Dr. Truman's regularly, and so in the mornings Margaret and her mamma were often left alone to go on with their different pursuits; but in the evenings they always had Edward, and his return was the signal for work to be laid aside, and bright and pleasant hours to begin.

As spring came on, Mrs. Armstrong felt less strong to bear up against her anxiety, because the time grew nearer in which she might begin to hope. She looked at the opening buds, and thought, "How will it be when the leaves now coming out are withering?" and though she tried to hope, the fear that another winter of anxiety awaited her was stronger than her hope. The "Resolute" and "Intrepid" had not returned the previous autumn, and the certainty that Captain M'Clure had been kept among the ice for a fourth dreary season added to the gloomy feelings that would often press upon her. It was too early to expect him yet, but if the following autumn did not bring the squadron home, the anxiety would be general.

Edward and Margaret had begun to train a pair of young carrier-pigeons, which were just fledged when Launcy was sent away, and were now fine young birds. This was another of Edward's preparations for his own possible voyage. If he went, he would take them with him to send back when he met with the "Pole-Star." As yet they had not been tried at any greater distance than two miles.

When the midsummer vacation began, on the 5th of June, the first thing Edward thought of was the journeys he could contrive for his pigeons. The very next morning he went early to their usual nest, that he might catch

them before they flew out for the day, intending to walk about five miles out, carrying them in a basket, and to let them fly, while Margaret watched for their return. He found them as he expected, and, taking one in each hand, was preparing to get down again, when he suddenly stopped, let both the birds fly without observing it, and looked into the nest again.

What was that heap of grey feathers in the farthest corner? He put in his hand and started, for he felt a little fluttering. His face flushed, and his hand trembled. He looked in again, and saw that the messenger had returned. Did it mean that Franklin was found? Yes, little Launcy was there, but gasping, with wings outstretched and film over his eyes, as if he were dying.

Scarcely believing his senses, Edward took the poor bird tenderly between his hands. The little feet stretched out stiffly. He hardly saw this; he thought of only one thing in the world at that moment, as he looked and felt beneath the torn and drooping wings for a note. There was nothing. He felt again, nervously, hoping he was wrong. No—there was nothing!

It was a cruel disappointment. Edward laid the poor bird in the nest again, and stood aghast at the top of the ladder. A minute before he had fancied he had words from his father in his possession, and it was almost too much to bear.

But this did not last long. A little tremulous motion of Launcy's beak, roused him to bring some help to the little creature who had come so faithfully and so wonderfully back, no one could say whence, nor how far. He took it again in his hands, and went down with it, and as he did so he stopped suddenly, as the thought occurred to him



THE RETURN OF THE CARRIER PIGEON.

"though he brings no note he must have left my father's care within a few days; four or five days ago, then, my father was safe."

He hurried into the house, and got a cup of cold water, rightly thinking that was the first want of his poor little pet. He put its beak into the water; it lay there without moving; he tried in vain for many minutes to rouse it to drink; then he took water in his own mouth, put Launcey's beak to his lips, and tried so, and succeeded at last. The poor little thing swallowed a few drops, then lay motionless, as if the effort had been too much for it; then again swallowed a little; till, having once begun, it went on and drank freely a long draught from the cup. Poor Launcey was saved. Edward then tried to get him to eat, and managed first to get some canary seed, that Margaret kept for her birds, down his throat; then some hemp seed; then bread crumbs; and at last a few peas. Afterwards water again. Edward then placed him gently in a basket with some soft hay, and watched him till he folded his wings and settled to sleep.

All this time Edward's doubts and guesses about his father had become continually more terrible. If my father were on his way homeward he would not have sent the bird. He said he would not risk his life in that case—at least, unless he found Franklin! But then he would surely have sent a note to say so. How can it be that there is none? Has the ship been wrecked, or some dreadful disaster happened, and the bird escaped and flown away? There may have been something tied under the wing, and it may have been lost; but if everything was right, and he had time, my father would have been sure to tie it on securely.

Tormenting himself with these fears, Edward looked up at his mother's windows. It was still so early that he could not bear to disturb her ; but he longed so much to tell her that the poor bird had come back to them, and to hear what she felt and would think about there being no note, that he went softly to her door, and tapped very gently, carrying the basket. She opened the door herself ; she was up and dressed. He was not prepared for this, and had intended to announce the news carefully to her, lest he should give her a shock ; but now, when seeing his agitated face, she asked rather hurriedly what was the matter, he held up the basket.

"Oh, he has sent it !" she cried. "It has come ! Give me his note !"

"There is none, my dear mother !—there is nothing," said Edward ; and he placed the basket on the floor, held her hands tenderly in his, and looked at her anxiously.

"None !—not a word ! He would have sent a letter carefully if he had been able, and he would not have sent the bird at all so late in the season as this if he were coming himself this year. But that little creature has come from his hands ; perhaps only a few days ago he held it. He is going farther from us, Edward—I know he is !" and she trembled so that she was obliged to sit down.

"But I cannot understand," she went on, "there being no note. I begin to fear something dreadful. The ship may have been wrecked, and the bird has escaped and flown back."

These words, echoing Edward's thought, made him start and turn pale ; and instead of being able to strengthen his mother, his tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth, and she looked at him in terror.

But the sound of their voices had awakened Margaret, who slept in the next room ; and she had started up, and ran in to see what was the matter. She was in a moment kneeling beside the basket, kissing and fondling her little Launcy, rejoicing that he had returned, and asking for his message.

"None, my child!—no message!" said her mother, in a tone of anguish.

"But there *has* been one!" cried Margaret. "Look here! I feel a little cord under the feathers. Look, mamma! Feel, Edward!"

She was right. There was a small and fine cord, as she said, carefully fastened round the bird under the feathers. This was proof that the messenger had been sent off, and had not flown away from a wrecked ship. That whatever had been fastened there had been lost was a great disappointment ; but the relief of finding that there had been something was so great that a kind of rejoicing and congratulation began among them. A few days ago, he whom they so loved and longed for sent this little creature off to them ; a few days ago, he was safe.

They were silent for some time. Mrs. Armstrong was in deep thought, with her eyes fixed on the pigeon, and Edward and Margaret did not like to interrupt her. She was trying to collect herself, to gain sufficient calmness to think, if possible, what sort of note had been fastened to that cord, and why it had been lost. It was not like her husband to do anything imperfectly. If he had tied it on, it would have been secure ; it would have been written on some strong material that would not have been torn off. Was he ill? Had he been obliged to employ some one else?

She drove this thought away, and tried to remember the length of the flight, and the possibility that no precaution could have prevented the accident. The same thing had happened, she recollected, in the case of Sir James Ross's carrier-pigeon, which arrived safely, but had lost his note.

Then came the hope that her husband had found Franklin. Was this possible? He said, that if he did find Franklin he should not be able to resist the desire to make all England share in his joy, and therefore should despatch the messenger. It seemed too much to hope. It was more likely that he was going farther north, and certainly not to return this year.

"No, he will not return this year," she said, aloud; "he is going farther from us."

"I fear that, too," said Edward. "Another winter in the ice he will have; a third he shall not, if I live and God will let me go to find him!"

It was the first time Edward had ever said this, often as he had resolved it; and his words made his mother start, and clasp his hand with a mixed feeling of joy and anguish.

Margaret was meanwhile busy about the bird. "I am trying to get off the cord, mamma," she said, in answer to an inquiring look; "it feels tight, and perhaps it hurts him."

Edward helped her, and with some difficulty they began to unwind it. It was passed twice round the body, and almost woven in among the feathers. At one spot it was entangled with them, and Margaret could not remove it without pulling out a little of the down. In the midst of the soft grey down was something white. Margaret

nervously tried to disentangle it, and her mother and Edward saw it at the same moment: it was a small scrap of paper.

"Are there words on it—any words?" said Mrs. Armstrong, almost in a whisper, "I cannot see."

"Spread it out, Maggie," said Edward, "you will do it best."

She smoothed out the crumpled bit of paper carefully, and as quickly as her little trembling fingers were able.

"I can see letters on it written in pencil," she said. "What is it, Edward? '*We are*——'"

Edward looked, but did not speak.

"'*We are well!*' it means," said Mrs. Armstrong, quickly and joyfully. "I can distinctly read '*We are,*' and then '*w, e.*' It must mean *well*. All the rest is gone. Oh, thank God for those words!"

Edward rushed out of the room, and returned with a magnifying glass; he knelt down by the table, and looked at the paper through it; then letting the glass fall on the floor, he sank his head on the table and buried his hands in his hair.

"Am I wrong? Is it not an '*e*'? Can it be an '*r*'?" gasped his mother. "Speak, Edward!"

"It is an '*r*.' That word could only be one dreadful word; I can think of no other: '*We are wrecked!*' Oh, my dear mother!" he cried, starting up, "keep up your courage in this dreadful trial. Think only of one thing—think only of this, that he was alive. If the ship is wrecked, he has not perished in it: think of this!"

Margaret threw her arms round her mother, crying bitterly. Oh how dreadful it seemed to think of her papa wrecked! No ship, perhaps no food—perhaps alone! "Do

you think he is cast ashore all alone, Edward?" she sobbed.

"No, that I am sure he is not," answered he. "When the danger came, and the last crash came, he was the last man that left his ship; *that* I am as sure of as that I live. He would not put himself in safety while one single man was in danger, I know. I could answer for it with my life."

It seemed as if Edward's proud confidence in his father revived his mother's courage; she looked up, and began again to examine the scrap of paper.

"It is his hand," she said; "I know the form of the letters perfectly; but being written only in pencil tells us a tale, Edward. He had no ink or pen, or he would have used them. They *had* saved nothing—no stores—nothing! Some one desk, with ink and pens, would otherwise have been at hand. Oh, it is dreadful!"

"Look! do you see this little blue border to the paper? I know this is a scrap torn from his pocket-book, that Margaret gave him for a keepsake," said Edward.

"It is—yes it is! He had no paper or parchment, which otherwise he would have sent; nothing, perhaps, saved but the clothes he had on."

"Mamma," cried Margaret, "we must have been blind not to see what this cord is, but I never thought of anything but the piece of paper; it is part of the long hair-chain of his watch, made of your hair."

"It is—it is, indeed, mother!" said Edward. "He has kept half and sent half. He knew nothing was so safe as hair."

A silence of a few minutes followed. Mrs. Armstrong's feelings were too strong for words, but thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, and the confidence she had in her husband supported her. He was wrecked, but she had full

trust that his crew were saved with him. Still more, she was sure that he had a motive for sending the message. He would not have sent to them only to break their hearts with the knowledge of his disaster. He had sent to bring a rescue. She started up, and Edward's words answered her thought.

"We must not lose a moment!" he cried. "Help me off to Aberdeen. I must go to Sir Hugh; he only can advise me, or assist me to get away. I cannot tell how it is to be done, but done it must be somehow. If a ship could be prepared within a month, I think we might be in time; certainly we could if we can get a steamer."

"You are right, my dear Edward!—my dear boy! We will not lose a moment. Say to Sir Hugh that all I have I will give to fit out a ship. What is anything worth to us, if we lose your father? Sir Hugh is kind and generous, and will help us, I know. Tell him what I have said; and, Margaret, run and call up the servants, and get breakfast for Edward, and I will pack his portmanteau. He will be in time for the early train."

She was hurrying out, but Edward ran towards her, took her hand, and looked anxiously in her face.

"Do not fear for me, Edward: I am quite calm. I have perfect faith that He who permitted the message to come to us will strengthen us to act upon it, and give us His blessing. May He bless you, my dear boy!"

"Then you consent to my going to seek him myself?"

"I do consent, and have comfort in the thought of the strength and power of your courage and love."

Without another word they separated, she to prepare what was required for his journey, he to John's room, where he remained for a quarter of an hour in earnest con-

sultation. He was called away to breakfast, and obeyed his mother's entreaty that he would try to eat, or he could never go through the fatigue that was before him. She was sitting by him, pouring out his coffee, when John came in, and as he looked at her he was astonished at her calmness. He squeezed her hand, and as he did so, felt that she was worthy to be the wife of his brave uncle, and that Edward, whom this morning's conversation had made him love and admire more than he ever did before, might well be a fine fellow, with such a father and mother. Every one was calm but poor little Margaret, whose tears flowed constantly: her heart ached; the words she tried to say choked her; but she waited on every one, and tried to hide her tears. No wonder they flowed: she was haunted by terrible pictures of her dear papa suffering from cold and hunger amidst ice and snow; she was going to lose Edward. There seemed nothing but misery in the world. John tried to comfort the poor little girl.

"We are going to find him and bring him back, Maggie. Edward and I shall be sure to find him. We have made all our plans."

"You, John!" cried Mrs. Armstrong.

"You do not think I would stay behind, do you?" he answered. "Edward takes my message to Sir Hugh, that if a ship can be provided, I will take the command."

Mrs. Armstrong could not speak; she felt all the affection and noble-hearted energy of this resolution, at a moment when he had scarcely recovered the hardships of his last voyage, but it was a great comfort to her. John had been accustomed to the sea from boyhood, had been two Arctic voyages, and had the highest character in his profession. Above all, Edward would have his care and

companionship. She was, however, deeply affected as she held her hand to him, and said, in a low but fervent tone, how she thanked him, and how much she felt the sacrifice he was making. He replied, that the sacrifice would be to stay at home.

Edward had risen from the table, and was preparing to go.

"We have still three minutes," said John looking at his watch. "I want to say one thing more: I do not want to deny the terrible nature of the trial to you—we, I may say—have to bear; but remember, it is summer, and that in summer the Arctic regions abound in life. If my uncle saved ammunition and rifles, there is no fear as to his being able to hold out; and it is like him to remember that they were all important, and to neglect everything else in comparison."

"I know it," said Mrs. Armstrong; "I feel—I am quite certain—that if he did not believe he could hold out, he would never have sent to us; he would not have encouraged a useless risk of other valuable lives: I know my husband too well for that. If he knew that before aid could come they must——," but she could not go on: the dreadful images that came before her made her turn deadly pale.

Both John and Edward went to her. Edward's arm supported her, and she soon recovered herself.

"You must go now, my dear boy!" she said; "but I shall see you again?"

"Oh, yes! I shall only settle with Sir Hugh what can be done, and then return to prepare for the voyage."

John had already got the portmanteau on his shoulder, and was standing at the door.

"He only goes to see me off," said Edward; "he will

be back with you directly, and tell you of all our plans and hopes, that I have no time for. Good-bye, my poor little Maggie!—my dear, dear mother!” And he ran after John, who was already on his way.

CHAPTER XIII.

PREPARATION.

THE third day brought the following letter from Edward to his mother:—

“Aberdeen, June 8th, 1854.

“My dear Mother,—Sir Hugh gives us a ship! He will not hear the word ‘expense.’ He will not let you even share it with him. But, better than all, we may be off by the 1st of July. How it happens that he can be so quick over his preparations I will tell you when I have time. How kind, generous, and noble Sir Hugh is! I knew he was, but he is more than I knew.

“Tell John we want him here the very moment he can settle his business at the Admiralty. He is wanted here very much indeed. I shall wait till he comes, and do all I can, for there is a great deal to do; but then I am so ignorant about it all, that I can do hardly any good without him.

“My dear mother, I think of you very often. Sometimes I feel as if you could never get through such a hard trial and terrible time as this will be; but I hope you will, for our sakes—for my father’s sake! Think of him when he comes home! He must find you well, to cheer him after all he has suffered.

“Only think that Sir Hugh, who we little fancied had

any anxious thoughts about my father, has been all this time preparing a ship that it might be ready for next spring, in case he did not come home this year. She is built of great strength, for Arctic service, and if never wanted for this search, was to be used as a whaler, but she is now fitted with a screw-engine. This is of the greatest importance for our speed. We shall not care for calms or contrary winds, and boring through the ice is much easier with a steamer. She is christened the 'Constance;' do you like that name?

"I have just found out that I may go and see her before the post hour, so I will stop now, and finish when I come in.

* * * * *

"I have seen the 'Constance,' and am delighted with her. She has three masts. They say her build is so capital, and she carries such a crowd of sail, that she has proved a first-rate sailer, though she is five feet solid timber in the bows and has a double deck. Tell Maggie she is painted black, with a bright band of white and blue, and a lady dressed in white and blue for a figure-head. I wish the face was like you, but it is not. Maggie will not think black sounds pretty, but it will look very well rising out of the blue sea, with the tall masts and new white sails. We shall have several flags for signals, and mean to come back into harbour in triumph, decked out in them, and you are both to be on the pier to receive us.

"I have not told you that Aunt Mary sets off this afternoon for London, to go to you. Sir Hugh cannot bear to be without her, but he is ready to do anything to comfort you. She has been so affectionate to me! She is very unhappy about us all. I shall soon come and bring her, you,

and Maggie back here with me, if you will consent. Sir Hugh hopes you will. You will then see us off.

"I have only a very little more time now, but I have a great deal to tell you. One thing I must say, Trident and Chloe are both to go, if you will let Trident, and I know you will; and Sir Hugh will look out for four more Newfoundlanders to make a splendid team. I have no time to tell you about our plans, sledges, etc., now.

"I only arrived here early this morning. At first they would not believe me, but I showed them the little bit of paper, and then they did. You were right to give it me. Aunt Mary cried so bitterly, and Sir Hugh quite trembled and looked white. He kept saying, 'My dear Harry! my dear Harry! I sent him! It was I sent him!' And then he rose up the moment I spoke of a ship, and told me about the one he had prepared, and declared that we should have her ready in three weeks. And he was so pleased about John going, I cannot tell you all he said: 'He's a brave, noble fellow! I could not have found such a commander at a short notice!' But then he began to make it a condition that I should not want to go too. I hardly know what I said, but he was very angry with me—called me a headstrong, foolish boy, that could be of no use, and would run into danger for nothing. I pleaded very hard with him. I said, 'Remember, John will have his ship to think of; his crew to care for; I shall have only one aim in the world—to find my father and save him. Just at the moment when he might be found, and when by delay we might lose him, John might be obliged by duty to stay by his ship and his men. I am not, indeed I think I am not, headstrong; I only want to save my father.'

"Well, I know that before I had done I was shaking all

over, and that they both came to me, and Aunt Mary said, 'He is right, my dear uncle.' I heard her say, that, and then he asked if you had consented, and I said you had. So then he consented, too, and was very kind to me. Aunt Mary made me have some breakfast, and would not let me speak again, but made me go and lie down on the bed, and I was so dreadfully tired that I went to sleep directly, and when I awoke it was twelve o'clock; and when I had had time to think and remember the ship, and that it was all settled, and we were really to go, I could hardly believe it. But now I must not write any more. Give my love to Maggie, and, my dear mother, I am your affectionate son,

"EDWARD ARMSTRONG."

This letter, which told Mrs. Armstrong all that was most important to know, was speedily followed by the arrival of her sister-in-law, who was astonished at her firmness under such trials. She seemed to have only one thought, and that was to speed the departure of the rescue-ship. She was employed every hour in preparing the necessary outfit for both John and Edward. And now she had, besides, to make her arrangements for leaving Fernhill for a time, for she had agreed to accept Sir Hugh's invitation. In all this Margaret assisted her, and while so fully employed recovered her spirits and often cheered her mother. Aunt Mary was also of the greatest use by her affectionate sympathy and her activity, and when there was any time for conversation, her talk was nearly always of Edward, whom she seemed unable to praise enough.

John had so much business in town that he could be very little with them. He had, however, completed every-

thing; engaged ten first-rate seamen, to make up the requisite number with those Sir Hugh expected to secure in Aberdeen, and given the necessary orders for tents, sledges, and such of the provisions and stores as were to be supplied in London, four days after Edward's letter arrived. He had left Greely in charge of seeing everything shipped off by the steamer, when he should send notice that it was time, and now he was sitting on the terrace with watch in hand, in order not to miss the train, encouraging Mrs. Armstrong to hope and trust, and setting the example by his cheerful face and voice, when some one came to say that Greely was waiting and anxious to see him for five minutes.

"Well, Peter, what is it?" said John, as he came up.

"I'm come to say, sir," said Peter, "that if you haven't engaged with a carpenter, and will take me, I'm your man."

"I have not fixed on a carpenter, and I heard this very day they have not found one yet down there. I could have a better man than you, I know; but think what you are about! You're well off here."

"That's my affair, sir. I'm ready if you are. The Captain might ha' done better if he'd have taken me. I've had experience, don't you see. That's where it is. Then, Master Edward is very young to go the voyage. I'm fixed to go and see after him, and not let him go on rashly, that's the idea of it. No harm shall happen to him, please God keep me alive. I'll be answerable for him. I'm fond of the young genelman."

Mrs. Armstrong was much affected by the feeling Peter showed, and felt that his going would be a comfort to her, if it could be done without injury to himself, and said so to John.

"Well, Greely," said he, "you shall be carpenter of the 'Constance.'"

"Thank ye, sir," said Peter, brightening up. "I'll be bound to say you shall never repent taking me. Pay all right, I suppose?"

"Quite right. Sir Hugh's a liberal paymaster."

"Yes, sir, I know that."

"But how do you manage as to your home and your wife?"

"Well, sir, my wife has made up her mind to it, and we were going to ask the favour of you, ma'am, to let us store up our things in your loft. She means to let the cottage, and go somewhere else for the time. She has one or two ideas about it, not altogether fixed yet."

"I will gladly take charge of the furniture," said Mrs. Armstrong, "and we will think farther of what she could do. Perhaps she will let me advise with her?"

Peter said she would be pleased and proud to do that.

There was no time for more. "Good-bye till we meet at Aberdeen," was said, and John was off. His arrival at Aberdeen was announced in another letter from Edward.

"He is as much delighted with the 'Constance' as I am," Edward went on to say. "I must tell you some more about her. I have told you her strength of build. She is warmed by a plan imitated from the French; a set of pipes heated by such a little furnace as you would not believe, carry warmth all over her, and also she is cleverly ventilated. We shall have neither cold nor damp, nor bad air. You should see the Captain's cabin! It is very small to be sure, but so neat, and there is one just to match it for my father. To have him in such comfort all next winter Will not that be a blessing? and we shall. I always re-

member your words, 'If he did not know he could hold out till help came, he would not have sent this message.'

"John is quite pleased, too, with our crew. I am so glad Peter is to go! What a kind old fellow he is!

"We have a master who has sailed every season in the whale fishery for fifteen years, and his mate is capital—first-rate! Then we are to have a surgeon who was educated at King's College here, and Sir Hugh says he is sure we shall like him; and I think we shall, from what I have seen of him. His name is Allen. He has never been on an Arctic voyage, but has travelled over all the rest of the world; at least some new place is always turning up. His last travels (in Africa) not very good preparation for the ice you will say. Then there is Greely and his mate, who is an Orkney man. Beside all these, we have five-and-twenty seamen. Those that John chose in London have all come; fine fellows they are, and every man of them has been at least one Arctic voyage. The rest are some from Orkney, some from Shetland, and the rest from Peterhead or Aberdeen, and are all used to the Greenland fishery.

"We have five boats, one of these is a life-boat; and we have besides a couple of India-rubber boats—capital things—that you can carry in the sledges and launch in any water you may have to cross. John has ordered two of the regular Admiralty sledges in London, and six tents, two of which are gutta-percha, two canvas, and two seal-skin. We shall get more sledges in Greenland, and twenty or thirty dogs.

"Besides all these, there are ice-saws, ice-chisels, ice-anchors, and the crow's nest. Have you not plenty to see? We carry in store a quantity of rough boards for housing over in winter, and gutta-percha for covering the deck.

"Our provisions will be abundant, and of the best quality. You can fancy how Sir Hugh would take care of that, and he is right. It is that wretched 'short allowance' that has cut up the men more than anything else. They want good food, and plenty of it, to keep out the cold. The pemmican is to come from London; the salt beef and pork, the preserved meat, soups, and vegetables, are procured here. You would be astonished at the amount of pickles and preserves ordered. Scotland is famous for the last, especially, you know. Then there is a quantity of lime-juice, and an immense store of tea, coffee, sugar, and cocoa. Spirits we are to use only for illness, or extraordinary occasions. John's only conditions are like Kane's, 'Temperance and no profane language.' The Esquimaux, who seem to live and grow fat where our people dwindle and die, do not know what ardent spirits are. But there is to be no 'captain's table,' we all fare alike. John says that the men who do all the hardest work, require at least as good food as their officers, and I am sure I think so.

"John and I both agree that our clothing should be as like the Esquimaux as possible. They dress entirely in skins and can brave any amount of cold. We take a double suit of seal or reindeer-skin for every one of us, and between thirty and forty spare suits for my father and his crew. I don't know whether Maggie knows that on the Arctic voyages they all sleep tied up in bags, with only their heads coming out. I suppose she does though, because I remember Peter telling us about it. We shall take blanket bags for the temperate climate at first, but afterwards we shall use nothing but bags made of skins, and we take about a hundred. One of Sir Hugh's ships has lately come in from Godhavn on the Greenland coast, with

a great cargo of reindeer and bear and seal-skins, among other things, so we are easily supplied.

“And now, having described our preparations, I shall tell you our plan. You know I have read every Arctic voyage that has been published, and John has had experience. Well, we both agree that the great difficulty seems always to have been to get out of harbour in spring. Commanders have naturally pushed on as far as possible the year they go out, before going into winter quarters. Perhaps they penetrate to a point where it does not happen every season that the ice opens at all; and so they have to wait year after year, and at last have to abandon their ships. John has resolved, therefore, to lay up the ‘Constance’ for the winter where we are certain from all experience that there is open water early in summer. This will be as near to the north-east point of Lancaster Sound as he can find a harbour. The journey to the shores of Jones’ Sound, where we trust to find my father, we shall perform with sledges. Straight across, it is not above a hundred miles.

“It will be a week before I am with you, for Peter is doing everything so cleverly in London that I am of more use here. John and I work like horses in the ship every day, till night stops us, and there is very little night here now.

“I know you are about as hard at work as we are, but I am going to ask you to do something besides, which I think you and Margaret can manage very well, assisted by Aunt Mary’s taste. We want you to choose for us a lot of things to barter with the natives. Scissors, knives, needles, pins, they value very much. We get here tools, nails, large knives, and all such heavy things. Yours are to be the elegances. We should like beads, toys, bright and warm handkerchiefs. In short, you will judge.

"Now, good-bye till I see you. Sir Hugh continues so very kind that I cannot tell you how kind, and spares no expense—will not let us think of money. Be ready to start for Aberdeen very soon. I shall only have a day or two to spend at home before we all leave it together."

Edward was true to his time. He arrived in a week, and found everything packed and prepared. He spent the whole of his first day in seeing Peter off in the Aberdeen steamer, with the tents, sledges, and provisions that had been ordered in London, and all the heavy luggage under his charge.

A satisfactory arrangement had been made for Mrs. Greely. Mrs. Armstrong had resolved to part with her servants, and to leave Mrs. Greely with her younger son Robert, who was a gardener, to take charge of Fernhill in her own absence. Mrs. Armstrong had not begun to look forward at all beyond the present move to Scotland, nor to think whether she should remain there or return home. Her whole power of thought and feeling seemed fixed on the moment when the ship should sail that was to take Edward from her, and go on its way to save his father.

Mrs. Greely was on the wharf near London Bridge to see her husband off, and made a last lamentation that he was going.

"I must go to look after Master Edward," he said; "it won't do for him to go without me. I shall take care to bring him safe back."

"If you bring yourself," said Mrs. Greely.

"All right, old lady; that's true, too. But I've gone through many a rough day, and it's hard if I don't get through this. When we were dragging our provisions and stores on from Fury Beach to Batty Bay to stow the boats,

on short allowance, I knocked up one day. They had to untackle me from off the rope and leave me behind on a rock; and there I lay like a dead man all alone. But you see I'm safe here for all that."

"Oh, yes, Peter," said Mrs. Greely, wiping her eyes; "but it was a wonder you were not starved to death o' cold and hunger; and many's the time I've heard your old mother tell her dream about you that very night, when she dreamed she see you shipwrecked and cast on a rock in a desert island."

"Yes, yes; it is a wonder I wasn't starved or drowned, or one thing or another. Only I used to say the sea wouldn't drown us. There was our cook went down in a hole in the ice, and come up again six times, blowing like a grampus, and was never a bit the worse. We're to have a good ship, and as good a captain as sails the seas; I'll say that for him, though he is but young. And let me tell you, that nine-tenths o' the ships that's wrecked and nine-tenths o' the men that's drowned needn't be wrecked nor drowned. The ships should have been broke up as unseaworthy, and the men put aboard better craft. That's where it is. Give me a good ship and a good captain, and I'll take my chance."

This was Peter's parting speech to his wife, as he left her standing on the wharf, and helped a porter to carry his weighty chest on board the steamer. Edward was already on deck, seeing Trident safely housed in a kennel, for he was to go also under Peter's charge.

Among the other sledges, Peter had insisted on taking the little one he made himself. "It's a little thing," he said, "but it's well made, I know that, and two dogs can chivy it along like the wind. Who knows but what it may

do good service there? It won't come to pieces, I'll be answerable."

He had strengthened it greatly. The runners were shod with annealed steel, and fastened with copper rivets, and all held together with seal-skin lashings. This pretty sledge was called "The Little Maggie."

Edward had ordered harness for six Newfoundland dogs, reckoning that six would make a powerful team. The harness consisted of breast collars of flat leather and a pair of traces for each. He meant to train them all, like Trident and Chloe, to obey the voice, and would fain have trusted entirely to them; but John would not hear of this, telling him that the power and speed, the enduring patience and sagacity of the Esquimaux dogs, were wonderful, and that they would find them most valuable for long journeys in bad weather and severe cold. They are trained, as he confessed, only to obey the whip, and are half savage and wolfish; still, Edward would learn to know their true worth. When Edward found that they were to have Esquimaux dogs, he said he should try to train them to go with the voice also, at which John only shook his head.

Margaret had kept one case open to show to Edward. It was that which contained the toys for barter; and she was quite pleased at his approbation. Among other things she had packed her doll, that had lain quiet in a drawer ever since she had ceased to play with it. Maggie did not tell Edward that it had been a little hard for her to part with this doll. When she went to the drawer to take it out, a few tears had come at the remembrance of the old times when she used to be so happy with it. Still she took it out, glad that anything she could give should help, however little, to find her papa.

"Tell me what becomes of her, Edward," she said; "and if some little Esquimaux girl gets her and seems to like her." And he promised he would, but never guessed how much it was to Maggie.

The last evening at Fernhill had come. Everything was ready. The cottage looked deserted and melancholy, and a strange silence seemed to have taken the place of the hasty preparations of the last week or two, and the cheerful sounds that used to be heard in it. The brother and sister were sitting together in the study. Margaret, who had been so busy and helpful to her mother, that she had scarcely had time to think, was quite tired, and her eyes seemed ready to close.

"Go up to bed, dear," said Edward, "we must be up in the morning, and off by the early train to London, and have a long journey before us."

"Good-night, then, Edward," she said, and threw her arms round his neck; and then the thought that this was the last time she should say good-night to him in their once happy home, for so long a time, made her burst into a passion of tears. Edward could scarcely restrain his as she went up to her room. The kind Mrs. Greely was there to help her, and assure her that she would take care of the pigeons and flowers, and everything, till they came back, and to remind her that the journey to-morrow would be pleasant, and that there was Aberdeen and the ship to be seen, and Margaret was soon asleep.

Edward meanwhile went in search of his mother, and found her sitting in the wood, at a spot that had been a particular favourite with his father, looking out at the distant view, lighted up by the last rays of the setting sun. She was quite calm, and she held her hand out to

him as he drew near. He sat down by her silently, and continuing to hold her hand, and watching her face, he saw large tears gather in her eyes.

"My mother, my dear mother!" he said, "can you bear it? Can you wait through the whole long year—more than the whole long year—that must pass?"

"My Edward! I have faced every thing—*every thing*!" she replied; "and I am ready to bear whatever it is the will of God to send. I think He will permit me to live to feel the joy, or will take me away before I know the sorrow, if it is to come; but I am ready—I think I am ready for either."

Edward could not speak.

"And Edward, my own dear boy, whatever is before me, nothing can take away my joy in you. You, with your energy, courage, and love, are my comfort on earth."

Edward had sunk down at her side, and clasped her tight in his arms. She only whispered to him, "Always take care of your little sister;" and then, gently rising, she took his arm, and they walked slowly in and separated for the night.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD-BYE TO FERNHILL.

ALL in the cottage were astir early in the morning, and there were no words of complaint or sadness among them. Every one was entirely occupied with preparations for instant departure. Mrs. Greely, with her quiet manner, waited on them at breakfast. At the proper time, Mrs.

Armstrong, taking Edward's arm, set off across the Common to the station, and, like her husband, when he went, never looked back. Her whole heart was full only of desire to go onwards.

Margaret was missing at the last moment, and her aunt, going to look for her, found her fondling and kissing little Launcy. She set him down in a moment, however, and putting her hand in her aunt's, they followed along the path without saying a word. It had been a great sorrow to Edward, as well as to Margaret, that they had no carrier-pigeon ready to be taken on the voyage. The two young ones that they had only just begun to train would have been useless, and Launcy was much too weak to be moved yet. It was doubtful, even with the care they had bestowed on him, and all Mrs. Greely had promised to continue, whether he would live. Even to take him to Scotland was impossible without risking his life, far less could he bear the confinement and bustle of the ship.

Soon after nine they were seated in the train for Edinburgh, where they were to stop for the night. They made a prosperous journey. Margaret, recovering her spirits a little, enjoyed the changing views, and was full of questions to Edward, especially as they drew near Scotland. Her mother, too, who had generally remained very silent, and often with closed eyes, began to look out eagerly when they came in sight of the sea. It seemed to her that now, at last, they were really on their way towards their great object.

They were too tired to do anything but go to bed in the hotel that evening; but Edward had time to take Margaret a walk about the beautiful city of Edinburgh before the train started for the north the next day. She

saw the hills and the sea; the Frith of Forth, with its islands and rocks, and the varied coast of Fife opposite. She saw, too, the Castle on its grand rock, and the old Palace of Holyrood, and the strange picturesque buildings of the old town, and the long wide streets and squares of the new town. Mrs. Armstrong only shook her head when they asked her to come and look at these things. She had one object always in her heart, and though she could preserve her calmness, and even talk and smile, she felt any attempt to amuse her only a cruelty, and every one soon understood her. No one suited her so well as her gentle sister; and Edward saw this, and felt great comfort in the thought that he was to leave her with Aunt Mary. It was Sir Hugh's wish to keep her and Margaret with him till the hoped-for return of the ship. Edward knew this, and trusted she would consent; but it was of no use to propose it to her at present. She was not able to think of her plans and prospects yet.

The railway, as it approaches Aberdeen, runs along the summits of the grand dark rocks, against the base of which the ocean dashes, and there is a splendid sea-view. It had never looked more beautiful than on this evening. The full moon rose out of the dark-blue sea in the east as the sun went down behind the hills on the west, and the extreme freshness of the air brought a colour even into Mrs. Armstrong's face. John met them at the station, and led them to Sir Hugh's carriage, which was in waiting to take them to his door. His house was a little way out of the city, standing in grounds of its own, and was large and handsome, and built, like everything else there, of granite. When Sir Hugh was in spirits, as he used to be, he called it his "granite palace;" but now he was anxious and

nervous, and not inclined to joke. He was on the steps when the carriage stopped, and received them most affectionately ; and while he led Mrs. Armstrong up-stairs, and told Aunt Mary how glad he was to have her back, Edward and Margaret were undergoing a most boisterous and loving reception from Trident and Chloe in the lobby. Margaret soon ran up after her mamma.

"Peter has arrived I see, by Trident being here," said Edward to John.

"Yes, quite safely, with everything he had in charge ; and everything is shipped. We sail to-morrow morning at eleven, with the tide. Is your mother prepared for such an immediate parting ?"

"She does not know of it, but she is strong enough to bear anything. Still, we will not tell her till to-morrow morning. She will sleep better, perhaps, without knowing it, and she is very much fatigued. She must be with this long journey, after all she has done and suffered."

"She and Margaret will come on board after breakfast ?"

"Oh, yes ; they reckon on that ; and they will see us off. It is much the best way ; and I am sure she will wish it. If this weather would but last !"

"It will last. We shall have this south-east wind for some days yet. I grudge every hour of it that we lose ; but to-morrow is the first moment we could get away."

The party were soon assembled at supper, but separated early for the night, with an engagement that they should visit the "Constance" after an eight-o'clock breakfast.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "CONSTANCE" SAILS.

THE next morning, the 1st of July, rose clear and bright, with a fresh breeze from the south-east, and the carriage was at the door at half-past eight, to convey the ladies to the harbour, accompanied by Sir Hugh. John and Edward had not breakfasted with them; they had been in the ship since six in the morning.

The carriage stopped, and Edward was at the door in a moment to hand them out. They walked to the entrance of the harbour, and saw the sea beyond, covered with white crests, and heard the dash of the waves against the break-water. A crowd of shipping lay in the harbour, and Margaret looked at one fine ship after another, thinking each would be the "Constance;" but they passed on to the very end of the pier. The "Constance" lay there ready to move out with the tide. John stood at the gangway ready to receive them. Every man was on board. There was no hurry nor confusion. The decks were clean and white; the tall masts and yards ready to receive the crowd of sail that would soon be spread to the wind; the anchor was heaved up; the boats were shipped. Mrs. Armstrong saw in a moment that the hour which she dreaded, and yet longed for, was at hand. She pressed Edward's arm and trembled, but her heart was firm and her faith supported her. She held out her hand to John, and as he led her on board she tried to say something to him; but, though her lips moved, no words came.

Every one on board stood bareheaded to receive her,

and a fine set of men they looked—men who bore the promise in their faces that they would do their work bravely; and there was not one among them but felt, as he looked at her pale face and her beautiful eyes, so full of feeling and yet of courage, that he would go through any dangers for her sake. John introduced his officers and men to her by name. Peter was not the only one among them she had seen before. Several of those John had brought from London had been at Fernhill; but at this moment she could not speak to any one, and scarcely could distinguish one face from another. It required all her strength to preserve her calmness. “Tell them,” she whispered to John, “that I am not able to say to them how much I feel for one and all.” He had scarcely occasion; they saw and understood the expression of her face.

Margaret, who did not observe the signs of instant departure so quickly, was all impatience to see everything, and Edward’s cabin in the first place; so he led her there directly.

It was, as she very naturally exclaimed, a funny little place, about six feet long and five wide. Edward chose to sleep in a hammock, so all she saw to serve as his bed was some canvas rolled tightly up, and two cot-hooks, one at each end of his cabin; and there could only be room to turn round in the space left when the hammock was slung. Two drawers, or lockers, as sailors call them, served as stand to a table, which, opening at the top, made a washstand. Above were two shelves filled with books; at the other end, a shelf, with his writing and drawing-desks. Various nails and hooks, each held some useful article. On one hung a lamp; on another an ink-bottle; on a third, his water-bottle for sketching; another was for his watch.

Opening his lockers, he showed her his clothes; his thick sailor's trousers and Jersey frock, his suits of seal-skin and deer-skin, and his sleeping-bags; and told her every man on board had the same. In a chest that he opened, he told her she would see his treasures. These were the clothes that had been prepared for his father; not only the furs and skins, but the linen and underclothing: every article of which had been made ready by his mother's hands or chosen by her. Margaret leaned her face down and left a kiss there before he closed the lid.

What she wanted to see next was Trident's kennel, and then the rest of the dogs; so she was conducted to the fore part of the ship, where six comfortable kennels were ranged. Trident and Chloe were at large, wandering where they liked, but the other four—Neptune, Nelson, Samson, and Juno—were chained up, and Edward would not let her go too near them, as, though they knew him, he was not sure of their behaviour to her. The sledges he could not show her. He could only point out to her where they were stowed away; but he took her to see the crow's nest, and she saw how a trap-door opened at the bottom to let the man go through, and then stand securely in it. He also showed her the ice-saw, twenty feet long, for sawing through the ice; the ice-chisels and ice-anchors, great iron hooks for throwing out and holding to bergs or floes, with the lines belonging to them. Margaret next saw the captain's cabin, and one to match it for her father, and peeped into some of the bed-places of the officers and men, and went down to the engine-room, and saw the engine, which would not be wanted while this wind lasted; the furnace, and the apparatus for melting snow or ice to supply water also the steward's room. She exclaimed in wonder at the

multitude of useful things it contained, stowed away in such small compass. She ended her journey over the ship by going into the large cabin between decks. Here there were long dining-tables ; plenty of comfortable seats ; also book-cases well filled with books ; the whole giving it an air of comfort. Here she found her mother, who had been led over the ship by John. Sir Hugh was there also, the munificent provider of all.

Mrs. Armstrong laid her hand on his arm. "We are very grateful to you," she said, as well as her trembling lips could say the words.

"Stay with me, my dear Constance, while they are away," he replied ; "and we will help each other to bear the tedious time till the ship returns. Give me the pleasure of feeling that I can take care of you and your dear little girl."

"Yes, dear mother, stay here, and let us meet you on this pier when that time comes. Keep up heart, and strength, and courage," said Edward.

"I will," she replied, and laid her hand in Sir Hugh's, as if to tell him she would accept his offer gratefully.

John took her other hand and grasped it, and looked in her face. She understood him. The time was come, and they must go ashore. He led her to the gangway. The pier was crowded, and every vessel and every height commanding a view of the harbour was filled with people to see the rescue-ship sail ; for great interest had been excited for the Armstrong family in their calamity, and in the circumstance of a boy of Edward's age having resolved to go in search of his father. Mrs. Armstrong, however, saw nothing that was around her. She walked quickly, and when John, stepping ashore, led her towards the carriage,

the people made a lane for her to pass through, and kept perfect silence. Edward followed: his little sister, who had only just found out the truth, clinging to him, convulsed with sobs and tears, so that he was obliged to lead her along with his arm round her waist, and many a pitying look followed the "poor lassie." Mrs. Armstrong was already seated with Sir Hugh and Miss Armstrong, who received her little niece in her arms when Edward lifted her in. The carriage-door was shut.

"Drive round to the high ground, where we can see the ship," said Sir Hugh. The coachman obeyed, and they drove off.

John and Edward were on board the next moment. There was a pause for five minutes. Then the gangway was removed; a bustle began on deck; the pilot stood at the helm: the ropes that held the ship were hauled in; slowly she began to move; she passed the end of the pier: loud cheers arose from the crowd, mixed with cries of "God bless and prosper ye!" "Gude-bye, and blessings on his young head that gangs sae far to save his father!" "Gude luck t'ye, and come hame safe!" "Send them hame!" and many a kind word of sympathy. And now, as the sounds ashore fell into silence, three hearty cheers rose from the ship, where the whole of the crew were collected on the quarter-deck, their young Captain and Edward conspicuous in the midst of them. The next moment the ropes and ladders were swarming with busy hands; from every yard the white sails were unfurled, and flapped and fluttered against the masts; each took its place and swelled to the wind; the pilot dropped from the stern into his boat to come ashore, and the "Constance" bounded over the waves.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOOD-BYE TO BRITAIN.

EVERY man on board seemed to have his special work to do as sail after sail was spread to the wind. John stood, telescope in hand, before the wheel, directing the two men who steered. He had forgotten home and all its cares, and joys, and sorrows, and his whole soul was in his ship. Mr. Macleod, the master, was giving his short, rapid orders to the seamen, who answered with their ready "Ay, ay, sir!" and hauled at the ropes with their usual song.

Edward alone stood looking over the side, to find the group who filled his heart at that moment. He still saw the crowds ashore, but not those he sought for; and that last look at his mother's face made him long to see that she was able to be there, somewhere.

Fast and faster flies the ship. The houses and spires of the city, the cliffs, the hills, begin to fall into distance; the people look smaller and smaller. "There they are!" he exclaims, half aloud, as he sees four figures appear clearly against the blue sky, on a rocky height beyond that on which the crowds had collected. Yes, there is his mother's light dress fluttering in the wind. She is leaning on Sir Hugh's arm, and Aunt Mary is at her other side; and there is Maggie, mounted on a pinnacle of rock behind them, and stretching out her arms towards him in her eager, loving way, not thinking any one can see her. But he can see her; he has his glass at his eye, and can see them all distinctly. He even sees their faces plainly. Sir Hugh is steadying a glass for his mother, and she looks through. He waves his handkerchief. She returns his signal. And

now Maggie—he feels as if he could hear her call his name as she jumps off her rock—is looking too, and she pulls off her shawl and waves it. It makes a long red streamer in the wind.

The breeze freshens. Not a breath of it is lost. The masts bend under the crowd of sail that is spread; the ship flies faster and faster; the forms he loves so well fade and melt into air; home is left behind; and the rescue voyage has begun in earnest.

“Ain’t she slippin’ through the water pretty?” said Peter’s voice behind him.

Edward started, for the tone and words made a strange contrast to the thoughts that were swelling within him; but he looked after Peter, who was hurrying off, tools in hand, to the fore part of the ship, and then dashed off after him, and was soon hard at work, hammering, sawing, and planing with him and his mate at some required alteration.

Edward had refused to take any charge in the ship, for he wanted to be free to give all his energies to his one great object. His hands were already hard with the work he had done while the ship was fitting out, and he was an expert enough carpenter to do a great deal. He was also fast learning to run up the ladders and climb the ropes, for this sort of clambering had always been much more to his taste than Greek and Latin. So, as he told John, he was to be considered as “Boy” in the ship, and set to help at everything. If he must have any title, it might be “Master of the Dogs,” for he engaged to take complete charge of them; and it would be one of his and Peter’s occupations to prepare shelter and accommodation for the addition to their number of dogs that they should get in Greenland.

Besides this, he promised to act as clerk or secretary, if John required one.

He was summoned from his work by Mr. Allen, who said the Captain wanted him.

"Oh, Edward, I have a minute's leisure now we are going steady on our course, and want you to come and look at the red granite cliffs of Peterhead, and tell me if you saw your mother and all of them again among the people ashore."

Edward told him of their recognition, and then turned to enjoy the fine view of the coast. There was almost a lull of work on board. The men were resting and sitting together in groups, chatting or smoking their pipes. The dinner-bell rang at two, and the party assembled. The whole ship's company were there, except those on duty, who had the table filled again for them afterwards, when they were relieved. There was a kind of feast this first day, provided by Sir Hugh, and it looked as if the fruit-market must have been emptied, so great was the show of strawberries. Edward did justice to the good fare with such an appetite as to make John laugh, and draw forth a mock lamentation from Allen, who said he had flattered himself he should have had one patient, at all events, for a few weeks; but he saw there was no hope for him: for if the pitching of the ship over this day's long rolling swell did not produce a touch of sea-sickness, there was not much chance for the future.

The Captain made a speech after dinner. He reminded the crew of the purpose of the voyage; told them in simple but touching language how the disaster of the "Pole-Star" had come to light; spoke of the pressing necessity for haste to relieve Captain Armstrong and his crew; said

he felt assured he could trust every man present to do his duty, and forward their great aim by ready obedience to discipline and the course he should think it right to pursue, and by cheerful endurance of hardship and danger, if need were; and that it should be his aim, while he pressed forward through fair weather and foul, to promote the harmony and well-being of them all. "But let our motto be," he concluded, "Onward to the rescue!"

This speech was heartily cheered; and he waited with Edward to preside at the second filling of the table, and repeated something of the same kind to the other men, after they had dined. On both occasions they showed great feeling, and many a rough hand was held out to Edward as they passed out to go on deck, with a kind expression of encouragement, such as, "Don't be downhearted any way!" "There'll be some one there directly!" "We'll be up with 'em!" "Keep heart!" and so on.

They were passing Kinnaird Head, and holding more to the eastward to cross the Moray Frith, when Edward got on deck again, and they saw no more of land till the sun set behind the bold headland at the north-east corner of Scotland. In that golden sunset the crew had assembled to evening prayers, led by their Captain, and afterwards Edward was glad to climb into his hammock, and was soon asleep.

They were lying-to in Stromness Roads, to land in Orkney for fresh butter and milk—their last chance before they crossed the wide Atlantic—when Edward awoke at the noise, and at some voice proclaiming, "One hour to go ashore!" So he jumped out, and had his clothes on, and got on deck as the boat was lowered, into which he dropped, after leave given by the Captain.

It was five o'clock on a lovely summer morning ; but the sun had been up since three, for there was hardly any night now in this northern latitude, and the air was as bright and clear as a diamond. Leaving Adam Black, the master's mate, who was trusted with the task of foraging, to visit the principal farm, Edward managed, by giving a shilling, to hire a Shetland pony, in order to ride to a small farm about two miles off, having heard a man say there were plenty of fresh eggs there. Adam tried to persuade him not to go, for fear he should be too long about it ; but Edward insisted on the good breakfasts the eggs would supply, and gained his point. So that, after the pony had kicked and turned round two or three times, it was obliged to yield to his urgent remonstrances in the shape of a stick, and galloped off up the stony road.

He drew up at the door of the farmhouse, and, telling his errand, was kindly asked to walk in. Early as it was, the family was all astir. There was but one room, but it was of good size. There were box bedsteads along the walls, which, having just given out their inhabitants, were in disorder. The peat fire had been newly lighted on the hearth in the middle of the floor, sheltered from the draught by a wall, about four feet high ; the smoke partially escaping at a hole above. A large iron pot full of water, ready to make the porridge for breakfast, hung over it by a chain suspended from the rafters. In one corner was a calf and a bevy of the fowls, to whom Edward's visit was in fact paid, for he came for their eggs ; a pig, a dog, and several ducks, were in another corner. All the human part of the household were gone out, except the gudewife, with a baby in her arms, and she went to collect the eggs without delay. She soon returned with four

dozen in a basket, and asked so small a price for the whole, that Edward, when he had slung the basket on his arm, and paid something over, refused to take the change. While they carried on some little altercation on this matter, he was suddenly assaulted from behind, and stretched on the ground at her feet by the pig, who was carrying on a boisterous game with the dog. Numbers of the eggs were smashed, and the rest rolled in all directions; the pig began to devour them as fast as possible, assisted by the ducks, who flew out of their corner upon the tempting food; the dog barked furiously, the baby screamed louder still, and the gudewife, seizing a stick, aimed blows at pig, dog, and ducks, in succession.

Edward contrived to get out of the scramble with some difficulty, but hardly was he on his feet, than he was provoked to see that a little urchin of a boy had unfastened the pony he had left tied to a post at the door, and then, frightened at the way it flung up its heels, had let go, and so the pony was off full speed home again. Everything sank into insignificance in comparison with the fear of being too late and keeping the boat waiting; so, without a thought given to the eggs, Edward darted off after him, leaving the gudewife lamenting over the havoc.

"Surely ye'll no gang awa' that gate," she shrieked after him, "leaving the siller and naething for it! Get oot every ane o' ye, and sorrow be wi' ye," she added, giving vigorous strokes in all directions, and sending all her creatures running and flying out at the doors, except the pig, who charged round the other side and came back again. "And you must gang and meddle wi' the powney, too," she cried to the boy outside. "Dinna stand greetin' there, but rin awa' down the lang loan and thro' the muckle field and see if

ye canna catch him for the puir callant ; and here, tak the tae half o' his siller back till him."

Off went the boy, and disappeared round a corner, while Edward in vain pursued his scamp of a pony, who cantered a little in front down the road, increasing his pace whenever it seemed likely he should be caught. Once he stopped to eat some grass, and then Edward believed he should have him ; the hand was almost on the mane, when a bright twinkle of the eye from out of the shaggy hair showed that there was no chance of any such thing, and the chase began again.

They were at the corner of a field at this moment, along two sides of which the road ran, the pony cantering down it. Edward climbed the stone fence and ran across the field. A boy was clambering over a gap at the opposite corner, towards which he steered ; and, having also clambered over, he found to his joy his pony standing, captured by the same boy who had let him loose.

"Thank ye, my boy," cried Edward, mounting, and throwing sixpence to him.

"Mither's sent ye the half o' the siller, will ye no tak back the siller ?" cried the boy, but Edward only shook his head and galloped off, scarcely hearing what was said. It was not till afterwards, when he thought it over, that he understood the poor woman's honesty. The boat's crew had begun to handle their oars and look out impatiently for him when he reached the beach. They had made a successful marketing, but Edward had but a poor account to give of his. There was many a laugh afterwards at his bargain in Orkney ; and to offer him a fresh egg at breakfast was a standing joke.

The ship had begun her westward course before the

boat had been hauled up for many minutes, and the Head of Hoy, the highest point of the red cliffs of Orkney, was lost to view before two hours were over. The last inhabitant of the islands they saw was an eagle, soaring overhead homewards to his eyrie.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OCEAN.

THE "Constance" had a splendid run across the Atlantic. Ten days after she left her harbour the flocks of sheerwaters, or Cape hens as the sailors call them, announced the near neighbourhood of Cape Farewell, the southern point of Greenland.

The wind had been wonderfully steady till this time, generally blowing from the south and east, but now a change seemed at hand. A heavy mist covered the sea on the night of the 12th; the wind became variable, blew in squalls from the west, then changed to south-east again and increased to a gale, under which the mists vanished, and showed a sky covered with heavy clouds, and the sea rose and dashed against the ship, breaking in foam over her decks. But the good ship was able to battle with the storm. She had but little sail, for the wind was so strong that the canvas would have been split into pieces by the furious blasts before which she was driven. The waves followed her almost as fast as she darted through the boiling waters, heaving up her stern, and then sinking her bows deep into the hollow of the sea, as if she would have dived down beneath the waves.

Throughout every hour of this night John stood on deck, two steady seamen were at the wheel, Macleod was at his post, and a careful look-out was kept. The long twilight of night and morning prevented total darkness, except for about one hour, when, as there was no moon, a sable curtain seemed to have fallen around, through which the roar of the tempest was heard. Then it was that Edward could see by the lights on board the steady faces of officers and men, as every one did his duty. He learned more in this night of John's character than he had ever known before, and the strong affection between them was made still stronger, for now he saw that the careless merry cousin, who had played with him as a boy, was as cool and firm in the hour of danger as he was careless and merry in play.

Edward would not go below, but chose to remain in the midst of the men, working with them. It was wonderful that the violent motion of the ship did not make him seasick. Perhaps it was the energy of his mind that kept him up, and his good spirits; for he felt no fear, and did not care for the storm, because it was driving them on faster towards his father. Peter, however, insisted on his keeping close by his side, and would on no consideration allow him to go aloft.

"No, no, Mr. Edward," he said, "it's all very well to be up on the maintop, if you will, any hour of the day or night when it's not blowing great guns, but I'll not be answerable for you to-night even on deck, if you won't keep close by me. Many a man's been washed overboard in lesser storms than this is. Ain't she a pretty craft now? Don't she ride out the gale sweetly? She cares no more for the waves than a duck, or one o' them divers as went

swimming past us in the twilight. Like a duck she is! that she is! Hold fast on that rope now! We shall ship that sea that's coming!" And then, after a good drenching with salt water, they stood steady waiting for the next orders.

The wind gradually abated as the night wore on, and about two o'clock in the morning a heavy bank of cloud that had hung over the horizon parted suddenly, and the first rays of the rising sun shot across the sea from behind the high mountains of Greenland. They had doubled Cape Farewell, and the ship's course was changing to the northward.

"Well, Edward, my boy!" said John, coming up to him and shaking him heartily by the hand, "there's a view to cheer our hearts! We've had a good fight for it this night, but we're all right now. The wind's easting more and more, and we shall soon be in smooth water. I must go to bed and get some sleep before we get up our steam, which we shall have to do before many hours are over, for a calm will follow all this, if I am not mistaken."

Edward promised to follow soon to take some rest and refreshment, but he could not all at once take his eyes off the grand view of the Greenland coast, that opened as the light increased. As he was making up his mind to go down, the Master gave orders for the crow's nest to be hoisted to its place, and he could not resist waiting to see the look-out man take his station. Then he waited a little longer, for the work that had just been done suggested the ice, and he longed to have the first look at it. Mr. Macleod told him two bergs had drifted past in the night, but he had not seen them.

Ten minutes had not passed, when "A berg a-head!" was shouted from the crow's nest.

There it was, the first iceberg Edward's eyes had seen, often as he had imagined one; and a grand sight it was. It looked, as it bore down on the ship, like a great mountain of ice rising out of the sea. The waves thundered against it, and dashed up its side a hundred feet.

"You're in luck, Mr. Edward," said Macleod; "you seldom see a taller berg than that as far south as we are now; and it will pass us to windward, so you may take a good look of it."

Edward asked its height, and was answered, "about three hundred feet above the water, and twice as much below."

As they drew nearer the great berg presented the appearance of a conical hill, bearing on its summit a vast cathedral of white marble veined with blue, rising into countless minarets and spires, which caught the rosy tint of the sky on their peaks. Every instant new wonders came to view; hollow caverns in its sides, into which the sea rushed and foamed, and rows of columns up which it dashed like tongues of flame. On it sailed, till a mist that began to creep over the sea hid it from view, except that sometimes it glanced and glittered through its cold white veil.

"Come along, Master Edward," said Peter, "I've got a kittle under weigh, and some boilin' water, and made you a good cup of hot coffee; and you can't see no more, and you're drenched to the skin. Get into your hammock, and we'll wake ye up in good time; the Captain won't be astir for four or five hours, I reckon, for he's had a pretty good spell o' the deck since yesterday morning. I'm pretty

well tired myself, and going to turn in, so I don't want to leave you a standin' here."

Edward was not at all sorry now to take Peter's good advice, and with many thanks for his coffee, which he found very comfortable, staggered down to his cabin and got off his wet clothes, not without several bumps and tumbles, for the motion was still excessive. Allen, who was his near neighbour, hailed him as he was settling down in his hammock.

"Holloa, Edward, is that you?"

"Yes! where have you been all this time?"

"Very miserable in bed. I thought I could stand any amount of pitching, but it has conquered me to-night."

"Poor old fellow! Can I do anything for you?"

"No—not unless you can steady the ship, and I suppose that's beyond you."

Edward was asleep before the last word. When he awoke at eight o'clock there was no motion at all. He began to think they were standing still, and got up that he might go and see. He had not finished dressing when Allen's voice, without any of the lamentable sound of the early morning in it, called out to him to "come up, for they had got among the ruins of Thebes."

What a scene he saw when he got on deck! The sea was as deep a blue as the sky above it, and perfectly calm. The bold coast of Greenland, with its dark cliffs and mountains capped with dazzling snow, lay on the right hand. On the left was—what was it? Allen had called it "the ruins of Thebes."

To Edward's eyes there appeared at the edge of the dark-blue sea an extensive plain, covered with the remains of ruined cities. Obelisks and needles of pure white marble

shot up into the sky. Enormous columns, glancing with all the colours of the rainbow, supported fantastic cupolas and domes studded with flashing diamonds. Fragments of massive walls tumbled about in confusion, here standing out square and dark against the sky, there shivered into angular forms, above which would again rise some great temple with porticoes and arches. While he gazed at this scene in blank amazement, he started, for it vanished as suddenly as a flash of lightning, leaving in its place the calm sea with a distant fleet of icebergs on its surface. He had been looking at one of the wonders of refraction ; so it has been agreed to call that state of the air which makes it reflect and repeat in irregular order, or upside down, or in wavy outline, natural objects which happen to be present. It is sometimes seen in our climate, and is common in the Arctic regions.

"You need not want to travel to Egypt after that," said Allen. "What we have seen is like the work of the Titans, and Karnac a temple of the pigmies in comparison."

While he spoke the wonderful sight returned as suddenly as it disappeared, but all distorted and indistinct, then vanished again.

"Oh, John, make haste!" cried Edward, seeing him emerge from his cabin. "Perhaps Thebes will come again. Yes; look there!"

The plain appeared again, more grandly covered than ever. Sometimes Allen declared it was Baalbec, sometimes Athens, but it was most like Thebes. John had never seen refraction make such a splendid picture before. As he said so it was gone, and it did not return.

"That's right, Macleod," said he, as he turned away, and looked up at the funnel, out of which the smoke was

rising: "you're getting up the steam, I see! Our sails may soon be taken in as useless."

The sails were, indeed, flapping lazily against the masts, and Edward had begun to feel a sort of feverish impatience creeping over him at the slowness of their progress. He had had no opportunity of feeling so before during their rapid voyage. Any one might have thought that he could take the opportunity of sketching a very picturesque iceberg that had just come in sight, pouring down a cataract of pure water from a hollow near its summit; but he felt no inclination to attempt it. Every hour since the morning when the dreadful news was brought home he had spent in energetic action, of one kind or other, towards forwarding the rescue. Either he had been travelling, helping to pack, ordering stores, or actually at work in the ship. To stand still and sketch would disgust him. He felt as if he should never care for it again; and now, as he looked round and saw nothing for him to do on deck, he was on the point of going down to the engine-room, to see how the stokers were getting on, when he heard a boat ordered to the iceberg to take in fresh water.

To get leave to join the boat-party and take his dogs for a run on the berg, was the work of a moment. Trident and Culoe were already at his side; the rest were soon unchained, and bounding and barking round him. Trident followed first to the ship's side, and instead of getting into the boat leaped at once into the sea.

"A capital thought!" said Edward to himself, beginning to take off his jacket. "Just throw my clothes into that cove at the side," said he, giving them in charge to the steersman; and off he went, and one dog after another splashing in after him, and the seven heads were soon in

rapid progress towards the berg, accompanied by shouts of laughter from the ship and boat.

The ice-cave was reached in safety, and Edward caught his bundle of clothes that the sailors threw to him, but it was no easy matter to dress among the rapturous bounds and caresses of his dogs. However, by means of some stern commands in a stentorian voice, he got rid of them and sent them scouring over the berg; after which he was soon ready to follow, for his thick sailor's trousers and red Jersey did not take long to put on. But he first explored the cave, which was wonderfully beautiful. It swelled into a dome in the centre, and the whole was in colour a transparent ultramarine blue. At the very end he found a black still lake of salt water, left there by the sea when stormy, perhaps reaching to an immense depth. He felt sure of it when he had thrown in a great boulder that lay on the brink, and observed the time it took before a hollow sound, echoing through the cave, told him it had reached the bottom. He shouted to hear the echo again, and his voice returned to him six times. Then he turned towards the opening to meet his dogs, for a chorus of deep-toned barking made him suppose they were all rushing in again, but he only saw Trident's dark body, contrasting with the bright blue of the sea beyond; the echo had multiplied his bark into a chorus. It sounded, however, like a summons, and he went out and explored the ice-mountain, up hill and down dale, getting many a good tumble, and slipping and sliding about, and determined to bring an ice-pole next time. Sharp crags and pinnacles ran high from the top; these it was impossible to climb, but he managed to reach the cavern beneath them, out of which the cascade poured down. The water came sparkling out beneath a canopy of

gigantic icicles, and all down its course the channel it had worked for itself was fringed with them. From the point where Edward stood he looked a hundred feet down a perpendicular wall of ice, like fretted silver, into the sea, and could see deep down through the blue waters the milky-white base of the berg, to a depth of at least two hundred.

Having sufficiently taken his pleasure, he joined the seamen in knocking off great blocks of ice with hammers and chisels, till, having got a sufficient load, they rowed back, the fleet of dogs following in the wake, and got on board, Edward and his dogs equally refreshed.

The square blocks of pure ice were put into the water-casks to melt in the sun, and proved delicious water. Allen, who had never seen such before, was as full of admiration as Edward, and said here was proof positive that icebergs were composed of fresh water and came off the land.

"To be sure they do!" said Peter, who was helping with the ice. "You never see a real berg nowhere but in Baffin's Bay and Davis' Strait, or in the Atlantic Ocean, where they drifts out into. They come from the great glasheers at the head o' the Bay, and comes sailin' down on the current. They're altogether a different thing from the sea-ice, that the floes and the great pack is made on. Those great glasheers is a wonderful sight, so they tells me. We hadn't none in Boothia."

"Ah, yes," said Allen, "now I remember: those northern glaciers are said to be composed of ice that is clear and compact, unlike the glaciers of the Alps, which are porous and thick, as if half snow, half ice. Nothing can be more clear and bright than these blocks you have here."

"It's a wonderful thing to me," said Peter, "where those quantities of ice come from on the land. They tell me some o' those glasheers is forty miles long by ten broad, and where there are chasms you see an enormous thickness—a hundred feet or more."

"It is occasioned by the enormous quantity of snow that falls on the tops of the mountains, thawing partially in the long Arctic sunlight, running down the slopes, freezing again, and filling the valleys. The glaciers of the Alps are the constant springs from which many of the rivers are constantly fed."

"Then what beats me," said Peter, "is why the ice don't stop on land and grow thicker and broader continually, and why it all comes slippin' down, as they say it does, and gets into the sea at last."

"Why, there's a constant process of thawing going on in the summer on all the outer surface, and at the outer edges of the ice-fields. Then the earth has a certain warmth that loosens their hold, and so they come down by their own weight. Besides this, convulsions occur that make changes and cause movements. The ice parts with a sound like thunder, sending out a blast of air of freezing coldness that has been imprisoned beneath it, and enormous masses are hurled down, piled on one another, and form ice-mountains. No doubt some of these bergs have been formed in that way."

"I remember," said Edward, "reading in Kane's account of the expedition of the 'Advance' and 'Rescue' in 1850, a description of the 'birth of an iceberg,' given by Herr Grundeitz, deputy-assistant of one of the Danish colonies in Greenland. He was fishing in a boat in the deep water at the base of the cliffs, and noticed a group of

seals sporting beneath one of the glaciers that protruded over the sea, forming an ice-canopy of enormous weight and thickness. Suddenly a ticking sound was heard, and the seals disappeared below the water. At this his Esquimaux attendants insisted on his removing farther off, and rowed him away a mile. Scarcely had they got this far when a tremendous explosion was heard, and a great mass fell into the sea, amidst foam and mist, with reverberations like thunder. The boat was almost upset by the rapid succession of swells, and in the commotion the mass that had caused it floated off, an iceberg. But, hurrah! The engine has got to work!"

And indeed the "Constance," suddenly roused from her laziness, began to cut her way through the water. Mile after mile of coast was soon left behind, and Edward was up in the crow's nest half the day, watching it, and rejoicing in the long track she left behind her in the smooth sea. He blessed the good screw in his heart, and Sir Hugh for giving it to them; and thought what irritation it would have been if they had lingered hour after hour becalmed.

Peter had always shaken his head and given a dissatisfied grunt when the screw was talked of. The "Victory's" engine was, according to him, the bane of the voyage, and the best day's work they did was when they hoisted her boilers overboard; but now he brightened up. "The right nail's been hit on the head this time, Master Edward," he said, "and no mistake;" and followed down to dinner with an excellent appetite.

It was an idle day on board, and the seamen had time to rest after the toils of the stormy day and night they had passed. Many had turned into their hammocks, others sat on deck smoking or dozing, and occasionally waking up to

make a joke or tell a story. Peter was quite in his element, of course. He was always wide awake, and always ready to talk; and his age, and real skill as a seaman and carpenter, gave him great weight among them; besides his dignity, as having passed four years in the Arctic seas. Edward often joined the group of his hearers. On one occasion, as he drew near, Peter started up with the cry of "A whale!"

Edward, looking out, saw nothing of the whale, but only a column of water, accompanied by a rushing sound, proceeding from the sea at a short distance from the ship. Very soon, however, the crown of the head of a large whale appeared above the water to breathe, the breath proceeding from his blow-hole, flying off like a small white cloud over the water. Not long afterwards he reared his great head, but apparently seeing the ship with his quick eye, he instantly dived, and did not appear again for eight or ten minutes, and then the spouting commenced much farther off.

"Did you ever, any on ye, stand upon a whale?"

"I should think sae," replied Ben Fiddes, a veteran of the Greenland fishery; "else hoo could we cut 'em up after we brought 'em alangside?"

"In course I mean a live whale," said Peter, disdainfully.

No one could say he had.

"Well, then, I have. I and one of our seamen were at work in the launch, getting in our nets; we'd been fishing; and he says, 'Here's a whale playing about under the launch. Be hanged if she ain't heeling her over!' So out I got on the whale's back, and held up my hands, and called out, 'Here I am on a whale!'"

"Well, what would she care? she wouldna feel your

weight no more than a fly," said Ben. "Did you ever see a whale go down tail foremost?"

Peter never did. None of the men ever did.

"Weel, then, I've seen it," said Ben. "Our ship, the 'Jane o' Boness' she was, got amang the bergs. There was a hunder o' 'em near us, and as we cam' roond a corner there was a whale. We'd had gude luck, and got a full cargo of oil, or we should ha' had something for to say till her; as it was, we car'd naething aboot her: but she didna ken that, and she was so crooded in amang the ice, and sae feared at oor ship, that doon she went, tail foremost, spooting out a cloud oot of her blow-hole wi' a soond like a stormy wind. That was a game. We had a gude laugh at it."

"I've seen a whale stand upright upon his tail, and rear up his heed fifty feet i' the air, in his rage at the harpoon," said Adam Black, the mate.

"And I've seen one lash the water wi' his, till it was foaming like a seething caldron," said Ben again.

"And I've seen one send a boat and all it's crew up i' the air wi' his," said Adam.

Peter felt as if all these tremendous stories would quite eclipse him, so he broke in with one about Captain Ross. "We got among the whalers in Baffin's Bay after we got aboard of the 'Isabella,' and Captain Humphreys sailed up and down among them like the Admiral. Whatever ship he came nigh he hailed, and 'I have to 'quaint Captain So-and-so that I've got Captain Ross and his men aboard o' me. If you've got any salt pork,' he says, 'or any salt beef,' he says, 'to spare, I shall be very glad to receive it,' he says, 'and very glad to introduce you to Captain Ross.'"

"What! was he short o' provisions?" asked Adam.

"This was the idea of it, don't you see. When we all got aboard, Captain Ross wanted us separated, some to be put aboard another ship, don't you see; but Captain Humphreys, he said rather than part with any of us he'd go on short allowance. So says Captain Ross, 'Now, Captain Humphreys, I give these men to your charge and disposal.' 'Proud I am,' he says, 'to take charge of such a set of men. Well, my lads,' says he, 'you as like work may work, and you as like play may play, and when I serve out grog to my crew I serve out grog to you all.' And then, as I said, he sailed up and down like the Admiral."

There was a silence. No one had a story to match this. The smoke curled up tranquilly from the pipes.

"Look at the seal, Master Edward," said Peter in a little while. "Don't you see his nose just above water? Down he goes in a crack. There's another! I see a dozen at the very least!"

Some time was passed looking after the seals, and at another whale that came in sight, but just as Ben had cleared his throat for another story, Edward heard his name shouted from the crow's nest. He was up in a minute, and there he found John.

"Do you see that strange cold whiteness in the sky, out there to the north?" asked John.

"Is it the ice-blink?"

"Yes. That peculiar appearance always tells you the ice is under it. We shall see the ice itself to-morrow."

"That's right. We shall seem to get near my father in earnest then. You're not afraid it will stop us?"

"No, no! No chance of that. We shall have nothing at this season to stop us till we get to the middle pack of Baffin's Bay—the great mass of ice that never melts. We

shall have to choose whether to force our way through it to get into Lancaster Sound, or round it on its northern face."

"Force through it, I vote."

"So do I, but we must take care we're not beset."

"Two things puzzle me," said Allen, who had climbed one of the ladders, tempted by the beauty of the day, and was only a little below them. "Two things puzzle me. One is why there is open water to the north of the pack, and another, why you leaders of Arctic expeditions to Lancaster Sound don't sail by the coast of America instead of Greenland, and so avoid crossing the pack altogether."

"As to the open water north of the pack, that is caused in summer by the usual break-up of the ice near the shore, and its drifting away southward from the northern coasts of Baffin's Bay; but in other parts of these regions we have all been astonished at finding open water to the north, and none of us scarcely doubt the existence of an open Polar Sea. That, however, has nothing to do with our enemy the pack here. As to keeping by the west shore of the bay, instead of the east, it has been tried; but it is more difficult than crossing the pack itself. That coast is blocked by ice, even in summer."

They stayed a good while together on the look-out, and did not come down till they had seen the peak of the sugarloaf-shaped hill called Sukkertoppen rising above the other hills of Greenland. Meanwhile Adam Black and Peter, both good shots, had killed an immense number of the sheerwaters and kittiewakes that were wheeling in flocks over the ship, and others of the men had caught some fine cod and halibut with lines. These fresh provisions were very valuable, and would be served out next day, instead of salt meat.

The night that followed this day was equally calm and lovely—night it could not be called, for even at twelve o'clock the sun was not below the horizon; he was resting on the dark-green waters to the north-west, like a vast ball of crimson fire, and all the sky was glowing with gold, green, and red light, ending at the zenith in rosy pink. It was so beautiful that Edward found it impossible to go down; so he stretched himself out on deck, and slept for an hour or two at a time, waking up now and then to look out and enjoy it. Although the sun had never set, and it was quite light, there was a stillness in the air quite unlike day. The sea-birds had gone to roost on their rocks, or drifted, fast asleep, on the water. On board, only the regular watch and the steersman were up, besides Macleod, who paced up and down while John rested. The dogs were coiled in their kennels, fast asleep; and only the two bells, fore and aft, that were struck every half-hour, or some short order from the master to the steersman, broke the silence.

Edward had been leaning over the side, looking at an iceberg, like a feudal castle with towers and battlements, that stood out black against the rosy sky, and was settling himself in his cloak for another sleep, when a thundering sound made him start to his feet; and then the violent motion of the ship, which began to pitch and roll in an extraordinary manner, knocked him down again. Every one rushed on deck, John among the foremost, but Macleod's calm voice soon explained the matter.

"An iceberg has broken up!" he said, pointing out to sea.

Edward's feudal castle was gone. The sea was foaming and dashing, and covered with its fragments; and hundreds of birds, that had gone to roost in its battle-

ments, filled the air, whirling and screaming in terror, and then took their flight towards the rocks. It was some time before the ship got out of the swell, but the astonished sleepers were glad to go back to bed, after congratulating each other that it was "all right," after all. Edward followed the example of the rest, and went down to his hammock.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DOGS AND THEIR MASTERS.

WHEN he came on deck again in the morning, the first thing that struck Edward's eyes was a brilliant white line passing swiftly to the southward, and contrasting in a dazzling way with the green sea: it was the stream-ice. The ice had broken up to the northward, and the current was bearing it down. Edward hailed it with joy, as if he had at last found a friend he had longed for. The next new sight was land on the left. They were in Davis' Strait, and America was visible on one side, while they still kept near Greenland.

Having examined the coast of America through his glass, he began to feast his eyes again on the ice, which continued to pass in one unbroken stream. This was not freshwater ice, like the bergs, but fragments of the great floes—the blue salt water, frozen solid. None of the pieces were higher than thirty feet, but they were beautifully transparent, and of all manner of fantastic forms. He took out of his pocket a letter that he was writing to Margaret, and for the first time since the voyage began,

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made some sketches suggested by them ; but he had put away his pencil before ten minutes were over. When he had done, he found that he had got a knight on horseback, a cathedral window, a banyan-tree with roots descending from the branches, and delicate foliage, like magnified hoar-frost, a smooth, perpendicular cliff, and a dragon ; but he had no means of imitating its emerald scales, shooting out rays of gold in the sun, or the knight's sapphire armour and snowy plume, or the diamonds and amethysts round the window. All he could do was to tell her that Alladin had made it. He knew he should be able to forward his letter from the Danish settlement of Godhavn, on the island of Disco, where they were to stop to take in coal, and every one was writing home to be in readiness.

The weather continued fine ; the only interruption to the progress of the ship arose from the dense fogs that often came on, during which it was necessary to proceed with caution and frequent soundings, keeping all possible watch against bergs or floating ice. When it was clear, much of Edward's time was spent in the crow's nest, whence he saw the grand mountain scenery of Greenland continually opening. Sometimes he saw magnificent cataracts flowing into the sea, which would become avalanches in winter. Icebergs became more numerous, sometimes a hundred being in view at once. The stream-ice had ceased ; but out to the left, at the distance of about ten miles, was now the edge of the southernmost point of the great pack. He had become familiar with seals, narwhales, and whales, and with the hosts of birds that filled the air, and wheeled over the summits of the cliffs—auks, terns or Greenland swallows, the pretty white snow-birds, the still more beautiful ivory gulls, petrels, kittiewakes, great clumsy burgo-

masters, the vultures of the Arctic seas, eider ducks, and geese. The sheerwaters did not fly so far from Cape Farewell.

One day he was admiring an iceberg that looked like a bridge of one great arch supporting a castle, when a huge dark form clambered up the bridge and approached the portal.

"Peter!" he shouted, "is that a walrus out there to leeward, on the bridge? Don't you see? The arch, I mean, among the bergs?"

"Yes, that's a walrus, and no mistake!" shouted Peter back again; "and there's his wife and his interesting family after him: they're going to bask in the sun up o' top o' the berg."

Notwithstanding all the pictures and descriptions that he knew of these creatures, Edward was astonished at their size, and weight, and strange uncouth movements, as they raised themselves towards the place they wanted to go to by the aid of their tusks. When they had reached the summit of the square tower of the castle, they appeared the very picture of indolent enjoyment: the old ones lay motionless, while the two young ones sported and gambled in their heavy way, sometimes sousing down head foremost into the sea, then scrambling up again. He saw several more on other bergs, but none that interested him so much as his first friends. He could see that they had abundant pasture-grounds, for the sea was so perfectly clear that he could distinguish the sea-weeds on which they feed, that covered the bottom at ten fathoms deep.

During the continuance of this fine weather they approached the island of Disco. They had nearly reached the 70th parallel of latitude, yet the air was warm; the

thermometer stood at 48° in the shade ; the men worked in light clothing, and scrubbed the decks with bare feet ; and, except for the occasional ice, icebergs, and the animal life around, it would have been difficult to believe they were within the Arctic circle.

They were nearing the island, and making preparations to get out a boat to go ashore, when John called to Edward to look out. "An Esquimaux in his kayak is coming out to us !"

There was visible to the naked eye only a little dark line on the sea, but through the glass Edward distinctly saw him. He came on with astonishing speed, paddling with a double-bladed oar ; his face appeared round, plump, and cheerful, with little eyes, high cheek-bones, a small flat nose, and rather thick lips ; he had a dark skin—made darker, perhaps, by dirt—a quantity of matted, bushy black hair, and a round worsted cap. All that could be seen besides of him was covered with a jacket made of seal-skin, and he was seated exactly as Peter had described, in a hole in the centre of his kayak, his legs being stretched under its cover or deck ; and as his jacket—or jumper, as it is usually called—was tightly fastened down round the hole, you could hardly tell where kayak ended and man began. The whole was, as Allen said, like a marine centaur—a sort of merman.

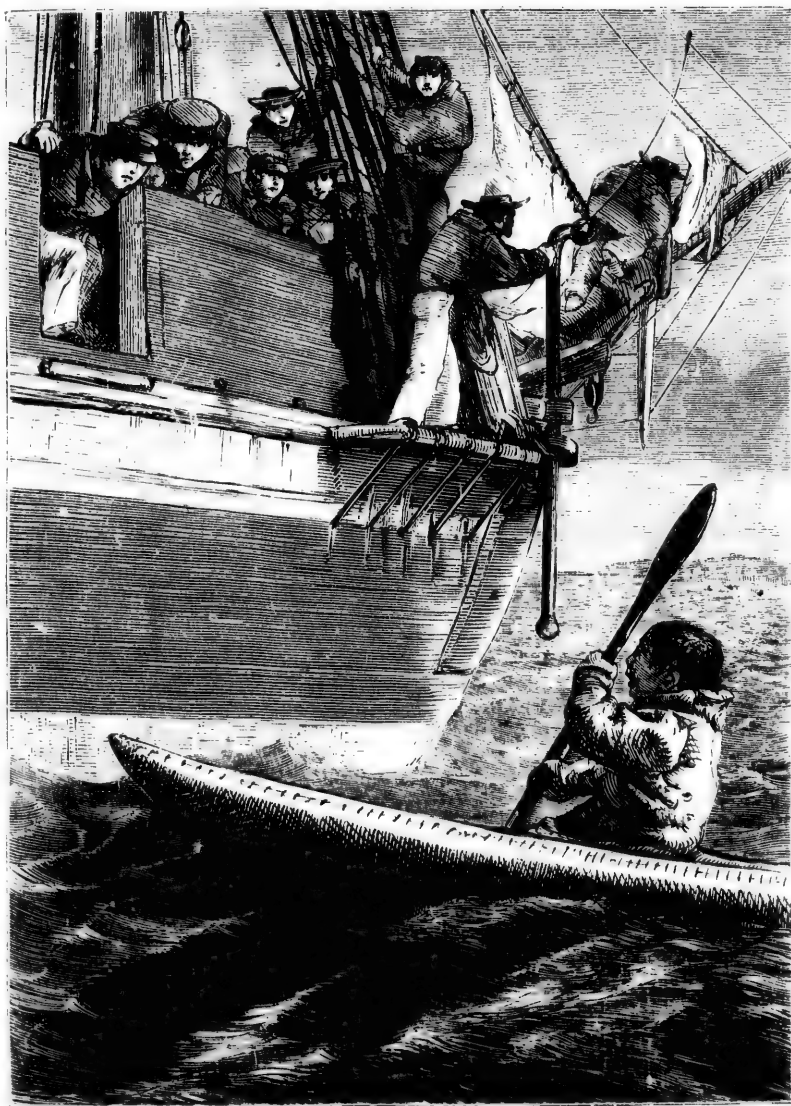
He was soon close to the ship, and immediately began turning somersets in the sea, which he did in the most dexterous manner. He took a heavy stone in one hand, threw himself over on that side, disappeared—kayak and all—under the water, and came up again as well as ever ; then he skimmed up to the ship, crying, "Pilletay !"—which means "Give !"—and received pieces of fat pork as

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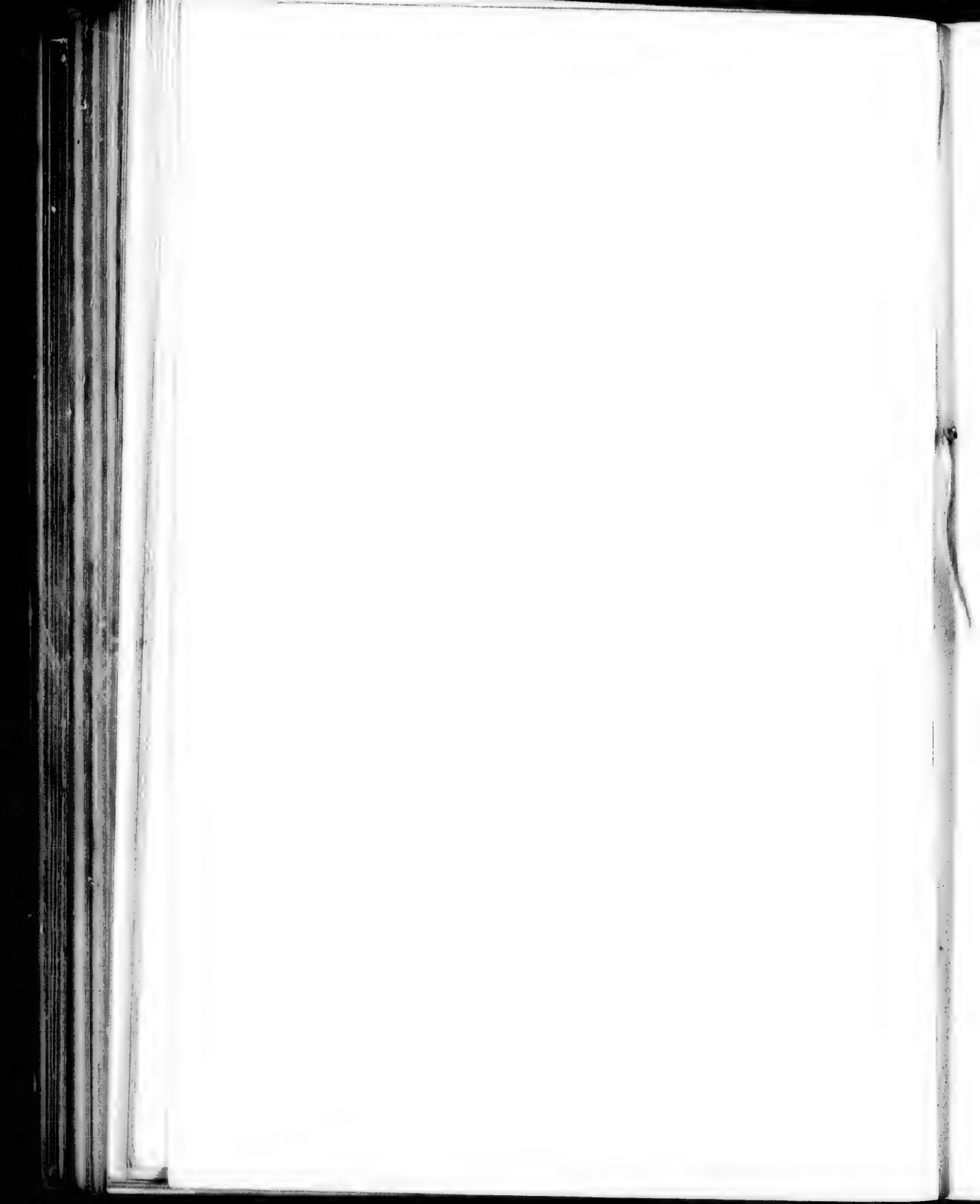
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THE FIRST ESQUIMAUX.



payment. Before long a fleet of kayacks was seen coming out, to the number of twenty or thirty, all very much like the first, and several of the men began the same kind of performance. As the ship continued its course, they gradually fell behind, and followed her to her anchorage under the island. Here a boat was manned; John himself, with Edward and Allen, who were curious to visit the place, and six men, went ashore; Peter was among them, as, in consequence of his long residence in Boothia, he was able to converse a little with the natives, though he found their dialect differed a good deal from that he had been acquainted with. Edward was charged with a package containing articles of barter, in case he could purchase skins or furs.

Disco is a Danish fishing-station, and one Dane presides over the Esquimaux families. This governor, or superintendent, has a house near the beach, of but small size or comfort, but a palace in comparison with the huts of the Esquimaux.

As the captain and his party landed, the whole settlement came to meet them, the men in front, the women behind them, with infants at their backs, the children next, and a colony of dogs remained howling in the background. All were dressed in skins, and women, as well as men, wore loose trousers, with long seal-skin boots that drew up over the knees. Some had reindeer fur, and some the fur of the white or grey fox; and, except that the women wore their hair drawn into a knot at the top of the head, in Chinese fashion, there was little in their dress to distinguish them from the men. They all made a great noise, clamouring, shouting, and gesticulating.

As John was anxious to lose as little time as possible, he divided his party into two, taking Allen and three of

the sailors with him to the superintendent's house, and sending Peter with Edward towards the huts; for the sight of the dogs and some sledges drawn up near them had made Edward long to get among them, in hopes of buying some of them.

The beach was anything but inviting, strewed with seal-blubber and offal. On every hand you saw oil, skins soaking in water or hung up to dry, or fish, also hung up to dry; and horrible smells met you at every step.

When Peter, by signs, and such words as he had at command, had made the Esquimaux understand that he and his officer wanted to buy dogs, the men crowded round, and with much loud talking led them up to a height where a summer tent, made of reindeer skins, was pitched on a rock over the sea. On the way they passed many of the winter huts, but they were chiefly deserted. A very old man at the door of one beckoned to Edward to come in, and he accordingly asked Peter to stop a moment for him, while he had a look inside. The old man stooped down, and groped his way along the narrow passage that made the entrance, Edward crawling after him, for it was only three feet high, but he very soon repented his curiosity, for the passage was wet, dirty, and offensive beyond description, and the odours that met him almost made him turn faint. However, he inwardly reproached himself for his effeminacy and crawled on. The old man pushed aside a thin skin, and then they both stood upright in a circular space of about eight feet in diameter, built of stone, with a few planks inside; the outside, as Edward had observed, was coated with mud, and in winter would be covered, besides, with snow. A kind of dais, or bench, was raised against the wall, which served for table and bed; in the middle

space, of about three feet, lay the body of a seal; on one side was an old woman, dreadfully thin, with gray hair, red and bleared eyes, and a bistre skin, sewing skins by the light of a lamp fed with oil; a hollow stone held the oil, and the wick was composed of dry moss. There was no passage for the escape of smoke, no light of day admitted. Harpoons, lances, rolls of skin, stood round; and besides that the seal nearly filled the small floor, it was impossible to find a spot that was not covered with grease and dirt, on which to set your foot. But what soon absorbed Edward's attention, and indeed prevented his seeing anything more after he once observed it, was a little dead baby lying on the side of the raised seat opposite to the old woman, with the mother beside it, weeping and lamenting. The poor young woman was very thinly clad, and had a baby in her arms. Edward could think of nothing he could do for any one there but to leave a present behind him, and as he had some trifles about him, he took a knife and two pairs of scissors out of his pocket and laid on the seat. The old man and woman brightened up, and seemed highly pleased, but the poor young mother never raised her head. When, however, he chanced to find a string of blue beads, and placed it round the baby's head, she looked up and smiled, thanking him energetically. He then hurried out again and joined Peter, and when he looked round at the fat, merry, careless faces of the Esquimaux that were crowding about him, he was half consoled for the misery he had just seen. "They don't seem to mind it," he thought to himself. But yet the misery tells upon them; this people is wearing out, according to all accounts. Their deserted settlements are found in many places, and they themselves say that they used to number more than they do now.

Having reached the height, they were invited into the tent. No one was there but an old man and four little children, except a litter of puppies with their mother: the father and mother of the children entered with Edward and Peter, and the other people pressed forward at the opening, but there was no possible room for more inside. The object of bringing the visitors here seemed to be to offer them the five puppies.

At this Peter put on an air of the utmost disdain, and was hurrying away, when the man caught him by the arm, and after a great many words, which Peter pretended to understand, though in fact he made but little of them, began to call loudly to his dogs.

A troop of twenty were very soon round the tent, and now began a noisy process of bargaining. Two other men soon came up, followed by more dogs, till nearly sixty were collected; another next appeared with a sledge. The scene had become very exciting, and Edward was obliged to remind Peter how little time they had to spare, the Captain having resolved to be under weigh in two hours from the time they stopped.

The agreement was to be made in money, for these Esquimaux are Danish subjects and used to buying and selling. At last Edward saw to his joy ten dogs set apart, and then Peter began to look at the sledges; another had been meanwhile brought, so he had to choose between them, and having fixed on one he began to drag it aside. But no sooner had he laid his hands on it than a woman threw herself upon it, holding it tight with both hands, and screaming and howling with all her might, rivers of tears streaming from her eyes.

Peter stood confounded. He fancied that this woman

had agreed to his offer for her sledge, but now it was certain that he was mistaken.

"I tell you I don't want your sledge," he shouted in her ear, forgetting she could not understand him. She shrieked and kicked more violently than before. He then said a multitude of words in the Esquimaux language, which he meant to be a polite assurance that he would let her alone; but they appeared to have been just the wrong thing, for they only produced louder shrieks.

"Come away, Peter!" said Edward. "The best thing we can do is to move off. Pay them for the dogs and the other sledge, if they will sell it, and let us go." As he spoke he handed five sovereigns to Peter, who had told him he thought that might be a fair price.

Peter accordingly beckoned to the man, who evidently agreed to part with his sledge, and to the owners of the ten dogs, and held up the five sovereigns. But at the sight of the money, hoots and exclamations of wrath began; the women talked, the children cried, the dogs howled, and the clamour was so great that they were almost deafened.

"It's a fair price," said Peter. "They're all mad together, I believe."

"They don't understand the money," said Edward.

"That's where it is I suppose," said Peter; "but what are we to do?"

"Let us go to the Governor's house, and try to make them follow us."

Peter accordingly began running about among the crowd, shaking some, pushing others, pointing the way he wanted to go, and calling out "Hoskey House," which is their name for the Governor's, till at last they understood, and the whole troop of people and dogs moved off with

him after Edward. The aggrieved woman alone remained seated on her beloved sledge.

As they approached the shore they saw three of the boats employed in carrying coals to the ship, and two Danish boats loading with oil, and presently John and Allen appeared with the Governor, and seemed much astonished at the crowd and noise. Edward hurried on and explained the matter to them, to John's infinite amusement; and Allen, who spoke Danish a little and German well, soon made the Governor understand what was the matter, and found that, in fact, the poor Esquimaux did not understand the value of the sovereigns. This was no sooner explained to them, than the dogs and sledge were put on board an oomiack, or woman's boat, with the most amusing bustle, and ten more dogs were offered, a fresh bargain made for them, and happily concluded. These being also put on board the oomiack, the late owners embarked with them, and would have started off for the ship instantly, had not John insisted that they should wait till either he or Edward could receive them on board. But it required all the authority of the Governor to make them obey; they wanted to gratify their curiosity, and perhaps to see what they could get; though they might not have stolen anything, for the missionaries have worked a wonderful improvement on the morality of those tribes on the Greenland coast.

Edward now brought forward his package, and the people were made to understand that he wanted to barter with them for skins. Some of them instantly ran off to their tents, others brought bundles out of their sledges, and at the sight of a heap of large clasp knives, and some nails, the ground was strewn with fox and reindeer skins, and the thick white fur of the Arctic hare. Very soon

Peter had gathered up the skins, and every man present was made happy by the possession of a knife and some nails, and began shouting with laughter, jumping and leaping about. Many jumped straight up and down, and continued this exercise for ten minutes. Edward now beckoned to the women, and gave to each as a free gift a pair of scissors, some pins, needles, and thread. The joy, gesticulations, laughter, and even tears that followed, were wonderful. Two women then came forward holding up a full suit of clothes, intended for some special occasion—perhaps for a bride—for they were made of white and gray fox-skin, arranged with some taste, and neatly sewn with tendons of reindeer. The boots were also dyed yellow. Edward bought this with a fresh supply of knives, scissors, and thimbles, and besides brought out as an offering to the whole party some beads and bright handkerchiefs; fresh acclamations following, and the two women beginning a sort of dance. Then he made the children come forward, and gave every one some toy. Balls, hard and soft, whips and tops, which he hastily set spinning himself, little wooden dolls, and tin animals. It seemed as if he would be deafened and pulled to pieces besides, in the frantic glee that followed, when, observing his cousin beckon to him from his boat, which was already in motion, he threw two footballs down, and kicked first one and then the other in the direction opposite to the boats. The boys soon caught the idea and set off after them, most of the girls and many of the men did the same, and began a game that left Edward free to escape. He scampered off and jumped into the last boat among the oil-casks. The oomiack was already alongside, and there it still lay when the boat came up. Peter was seated among the dogs, and was gravely writing

something in his large pocket-book. John was calling out to him to make haste, and in one of his towering passions because of the delay.

"What are you about, Peter?" said Edward.

"Takin' down the dogs' names. We should be lost else. Here, you Ben! chain up all the Newfoun'landers, Trident and all. Now then the rest of 'em, Nannook, Myouk, Disco, Una, Huske, Toodla, Whitey—that's all the twenty. Hoist 'em up. Lend a hand, Master Edward! They'll most on 'em answer to their names, and them as don't we'll give 'em new ones. Ay, ay, Captain! Ready in a crack we shall be. Now for the sledge!"

"Ho! yeo!" sung out the seamen, as it was swung up on deck, Peter scrambling after it. Edward and the boat's crew were already on deck, and the boat hauled up.

"It's no go. You can't come aboard," shouted Peter to the Esquimaux, who were clinging to the rope that still hung down. "Oh, I forgot, they can't understand. I'll go on shakin' of my head."

The rope was hauled in—the "Constance" began to move—they were off. The Esquimaux set up a howl, but the Captain was inexorable. Some time beyond his appointed two hours had passed; his last cargo of oil had been upset in an awkward manner by the Danish boatmen, and he had come away without it. It took him at least ten minutes to cool down, but then he had a good laugh over the bustle and noise with Edward, and was all right again.

There was plenty to do, stowing away all they had bought, coals, oil, skins, and dogs. The last were Edward's charge. He and Peter had their kennels ready long ago. He fed them plentifully with seals' flesh and fish, which Peter had provided, gave them abundance of water, and

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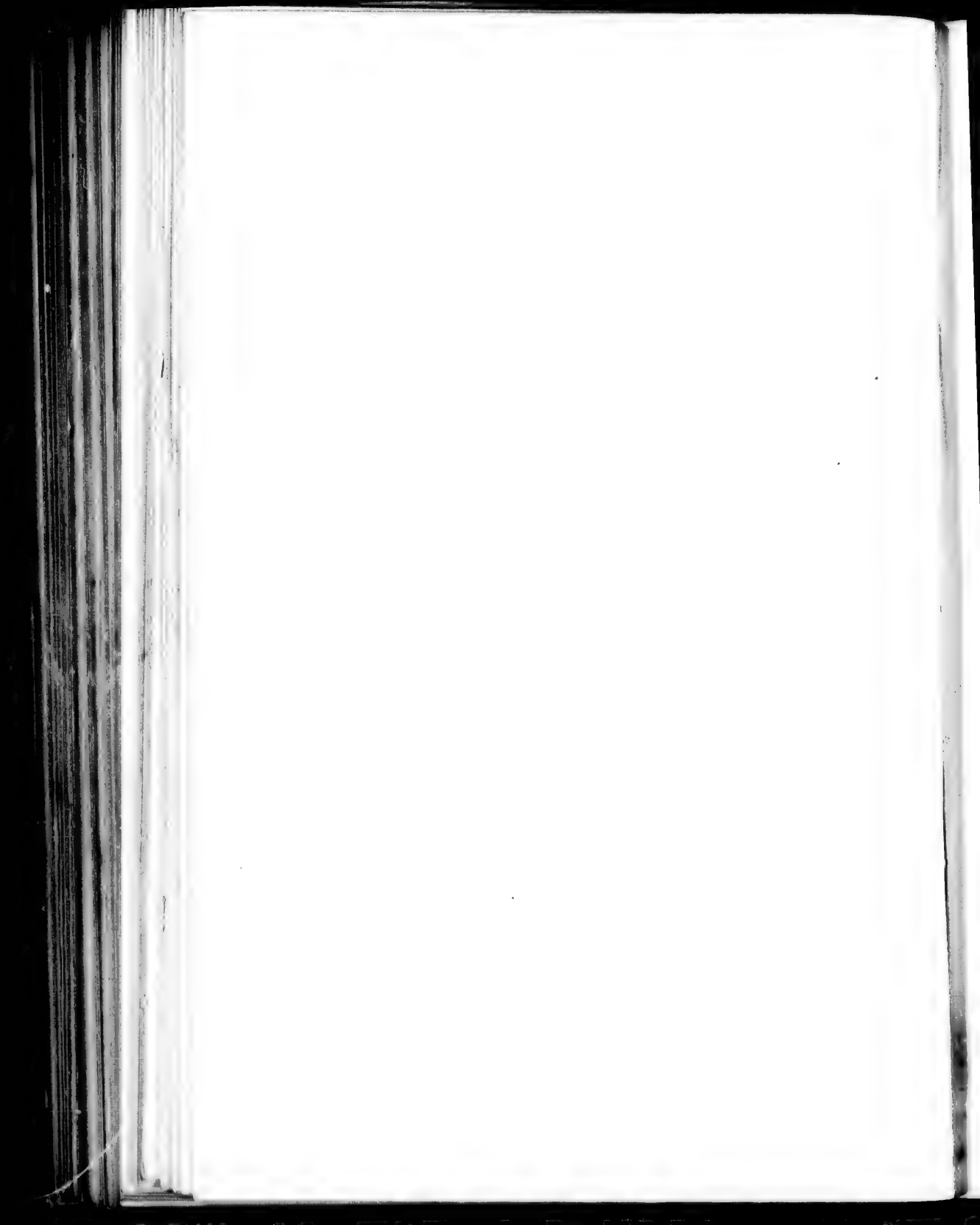
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THE ESQUIMAUX CHILDREN.



began to try to make acquaintance with them ; but they appeared very wild and untamed, and looked scared at the furious barking of the Newfoundlanders, who were all in violent excitement. The Esquimaux very rarely caress or pat their dogs, and manage them solely by the whip ; so it would take him some time to make any impression on them. But it was necessary to reconcile Trident and all the Newfoundlanders to the company of these intruders, and this task he set himself, and succeeded in a week or so pretty well.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ICE.

A VERY unfavourable change of weather occurred on the following day. The wind got round to the north, blew hard, and brought floating masses of ice down upon them, with a long swell, through which the ship laboured heavily. This wind was succeeded by a dense fog, that was even worse. Edward wandered about the deck with his hands in his pockets, feeling very wretched and impatient. At last he took a sudden resolution—went down to his cabin, which was quite dark in the fog, lighted his lamp, got out pen, ink, and paper, and sat down to begin a journal, from which we may make a short extract or two. Some day, as he thought to himself, it will amuse them at home, perhaps. And then he sat with his hands buried in his hair for several minutes. Then he began :—

“August is coming fast upon us, and we are creeping along in a fog. I am of no use on deck or aloft. There are plenty of eyes there if only they could see an inch

before them, and if we run foul of a berg or a floe we must hope we shall not be smashed. The best thing I can do is to drive away the present, if I can, by writing about what happened last week. To-day is the 29th, but I will write about what happened last Thursday. Here I go. It is the 24th of July. I am sitting very comfortably on the main-topsail-yard, looking right down into the water, and what I see there makes me fancy I can hear Maggie's voice reading something out of Andersen's story of the 'Little Mermaid.' It was this, as far as I can remember :—

“‘Now you must not imagine that there is nothing but sand below the water ; no, indeed, far from it ! Trees and plants of wondrous beauty grow there, whose stems and leaves are so light that they are waved to and fro by the slightest motion of the water. Fishes, great and small, glide in and out among the branches, just as birds fly about among our trees.’ Well, I am looking at all that as I sit here. The sea is as clear as crystal. Fourteen fathoms down I see a whole forest of sea-weeds at the bottom. Among them, fastened to the branches, and opening to the light, there are millions of sea anemones of every colour—*actinia* Allen calls them. There are groups of shell-fish, chiefly of the various kind of snail and whelk ;* but these common names give no idea of their gay colours and lovely shapes. There are jelly-fish floating everywhere, *medusæ* (Allen says) and *clios*, whole shoals of them, flashing colours in shady places, dancing merrily along, looking like butterflies before they spread their wings, or opening their crimson discs to the sun in a lazy fit. Now and then an exploring crab ventures up to the tree tops, but soon sidles down again into the shade. We are sailing, or rather steaming, for we

* *Limacinae* and *entomostraca*.

owe most of our progress to the screw, along a broad channel, having on our right the mountains of Greenland, and on our left, about ten miles off, the ice. It will come nearer to us soon, and we shall have to grapple with it by and by. I wish we had begun."

Another extract, dated the 5th of August, gives a different picture of the sea:—

"We have got into another fog. I never write but in a fog, for if we can move I always find something else to do. But we have had some fine weather, and got on well for the last week, till to-day. All this time we have had to make our way through water as green as grass, and quite thick. No more forests down below; no more pretty elios to be seen. For all I know they may be there, but they are invisible if they are—lost in a fog, like us. This greenness is caused, they say, by infinite myriads of minute creatures of the medusa kind. Allen, my great authority in learned matters here, tells me that they can be distinguished by the microscope, and that they occupy nearly one-fourth of the Greenland seas. Of course, my word 'infinite' is an absurdity; but really, if one thinks of the numbers there must be, one is lost. It is by this living water and the small creatures I saw before that the whale is nourished. His throat is too small for a herring to go down. I ought to have remembered all this, for I must have read it, but it was new to me. We are not above twenty miles from Upernavik now, if only we could move on. We are to stop there for an hour."

The fog had cleared by the next day, and they were only ten miles from Upernavik, in fine bright weather, when Edward, who was in the crow's nest looking at the coast, saw a dark object, which he could not make out, at the

foot of the cliffs. He studied it through his glass, and distinctly saw that it was a poor Esquimaux, who had been cast ashore, and was lying motionless on the sand. Edward hurried down and told John, who looked out and saw the same.

"Perhaps that poor fellow is not dead," said Edward. "I wish we could get ashore to see. It is wretched to lose a moment that we can avoid; but won't you send a boat ashore to see about him?"

John thought for a moment. "If there were life in the poor fellow," he said, "he would never lie there. Surely he could walk to Upernavik?"

"He may be still alive," said Edward, "and only stupefied. I cannot help thinking I saw him move his head just now."

"I will lower a boat, Edward, if you like to go ashore with two of the men, and we will proceed on our course and get through the business at Upernavik. You may row on to us and catch us up by the time we are ready to sail again, and bring him, if he is alive. Take Peter for one, if you go."

"The very thing!" said Edward.

Orders were given. The ship lay-to for a minute. A boat was lowered, and Edward, Peter, and Magnus Trail, one of the seamen, swung themselves down into it. They were just pushing off when Allen appeared with a bottle of brandy, saying that if it was a case of a half-drowned man, he must come and help; so he was seated next Edward, who prepared to steer, while the others took the oars.

"I see you've got your bottle, doctor," said Peter; "but I'll be bound to say I know what an Esquimaw likes best; and so you'll see when he gets hold o' this piece o'

seal's flesh. Here it is down in the bottom o' the boat. I stole it out o' the dogs' rations, and you'll see how he'll pitch into it—if he's got any life in him, that is."

They rapidly neared the land and went ashore, wading through the breakers, having left the boat in Norman's charge. They were soon by the Esquimaux. He lay as if dead in his kayak. The disaster had happened to him which sometimes happens to these poor people, and is almost the only danger they run on the sea. He had either struck on a sunken rock or a tongue of ice under water, and his kayak had broken in the middle. In this case a kayak becomes a hopeless wreck, and is drifted at the mercy of the waves. How long he might have lain in this state no one could say, but to all appearance he was starved to death.

Allen felt the pulse and shook his head; then, managing to get his hand through the thick coating of skins, felt the heart, and instantly applied a little brandy to the lips; then, unclosing them, poured some in, and told Peter and Edward to disengage the man from the kayak. He was stiff, and very cold; but by vigorous rubbing, a few more small doses of brandy, and loosening his hood, which was fastened tightly under his chin, he began to revive and to stare at the people who were helping him.

"He'll do yet," said Peter, offering him a small portion of seal. "No! he must be very bad still," he added, seeing that the poor man could not eat it.

"A draught of water must be his next medicine," said Allen, producing a tin can, which he had had the forethought to bring out of the boat.

Edward ran off to find the water, and had not far to go. A fine cascade came foaming over the rocks to the right,

and there he filled the can and returned with all speed. They put it to the poor fellow's lips; and he, at first swallowing with difficulty, soon went on greedily, and then accepted the tempting morsel which Peter again offered.

Allen now declared that he considered his patient safe, but that it was necessary he should lie quiet for, at any rate, half an hour, while he fed him now and then; so Edward started off to explore, for the sight that had struck him when he went for the water made him long to see more of it.

He found that the cascade flowed from a great glacier, or sea of ice, that sloped from the high mountains which bordered the coast. The spot from which the water issued might be about a hundred feet from the level of the sea. Looking up, he saw that curious sight that he had often read of—large patches of bright crimson snow, contrasting with the glittering whiteness that was predominant. The cause of this singular appearance is now known to be a red vegetable production growing abundantly in the snow. At his feet was an Arctic flower-garden and forest. The water had filtered through the soil, and wandered in little sparkling streams through moss of the richest green. Among the moss he found some poppies in flower, some ranunculi, one bright blue gentian, some chickweed, and sorrel. These plants were of the most minute size. He could have covered the whole garden with his jacket; but each miniature flower was perfect both in shape and colour. Walking on towards the rocks, he found coarse grass and sedges growing, and then some heaths and some birch-trees. These trees were also miniatures. One birch that he measured was thirteen inches high, but it was the tallest. He

next got into a thicket of willows, reaching about up to his ankle. Among these was a wild honeysuckle, so small, that the whole plant, root and branches, might have been stuck in his button-hole. He carefully pulled it up, and then dug up a few specimens of the birches and willows. He laid the whole collection on a ledge of rock, and then, having made up his mind to spend the remaining twenty minutes he had to spare in climbing the rocks, to look into the auks' nests, he began his ascent. He mounted to a considerable height, and was making his way in a horizontal direction to the place where he observed a multitude of nests, when he suddenly found that everything was sliding down under his feet. Fragments of stone bounded over him, and at each side of him; the pole he had brought with him was carried away; in vain he caught, first at one projecting point of rock, then at another; everything gave way with him, and the current of broken rocks and sand was bearing him headlong into the sea. Feeling this, he gave a desperate jump, managed to land on a large point of feldspar that was firm, and sat down to take breath. He had been nearly a quarter of an hour going up; but his descent had not occupied half a minute, so he had time. He was still at a considerable height. The auks and gulls were screaming round, wheeling so close to him that they sometimes touched him. At the very top of the rock several grave burgomasters were seated, looking as if they despised the bustle and clamour below. Looking landward into a hollow behind his point of rock he saw a large frozen lake, on which two ravens were fighting for some garbage, and one small animal that he supposed was a fox. It was a strange wild scene. He could hardly take his eyes off it.

"Holloah! Master Edward! Where have you got to?" shouted Peter from below.

"Here! I'll be with you directly," returned Edward, and taking a good aim so as to alight on firm ground, instead of dropping into the sea, he let himself go, and was down in an instant, amidst showers of stones and rubbish, just as Peter came round to the spot. Edward shook his clothes, and tried to look very composed, so that Peter might not find out where he had been, and lecture him; but Peter's eye was too quick to be deceived.

"You've been at some of your clambering now, Master Edward, I see that; you'll just do it once too often some day. And I ought to have come with you, instead of feedin' that Esquimaw. He's eaten all the seal, every bit, and drank two more cans o' water that I fetched; and the doctor's ready, so it's time for you to come."

Edward had only to run off to the rock, where he had left his little forest-trees, and was up with Peter directly. The sick man was already on his feet, and Peter, taking him by the arm, helped him down to the boat, while Edward made Allen hurry with him to take one glimpse of the green cove and crimson snow, and then they got off.

The Esquimaux was laid in the bottom of the boat, and fell fast asleep directly. Allen had made out that the poor fellow's name was Olaf. He had been christened that name. He belonged to Proven, and was half way to Disco when his misfortune happened; but how many days ago it was he had no idea. He was astonished to find that he had drifted to within ten miles of Upernavik, and he said he should like to go with the ship. He could speak enough of a sort of broken Danish to make himself understood.

Peter strongly advised that he should be taken with

them. "Better not ask his leave," said Peter, winking one eye and handling his oar vigorously all the time he talked. "He'll be better off by a long way, whether he thinks so or no. What's he to do with no kayak nor nothing at Upernavik, if we land him? and we want a good driver for our dog-teams. I can drive, so can the Captain; so he says, that is. And Ben, he says he can. Master Edward can manage his Newfoundlanders, but hasn't had no experience o' the Esquimaw dogs. They're altogether a different thing. The Captain oughtn't to have to drive much, for I defy any man to have his wits about him for anything else when he's got them dogs to mind. They're a worrit, as keeps any man at his wits' ends, let alone the whip—that's so long and heavy that your arm gets dead tired out in two hours."

"We ought to have ten more dogs, too, if possible," said Edward, "to make two teams of fifteen each; and I hope we shall."

"Yes, if the Captain takes *my* advice, he'll buy ten more where he's gone now. And I'm sure, Master Edward, you know so many's a great charge. This Esquimaw Olaf, if that's his queer name, would be a great help with that."

"An' he'd make ye a pair o' whips or so," said Magnus, the other oarsman. "I mind ye said ye'd clean forgotten them at Disco."

"In short," said Allen, "my patient seems to be too valuable to part with. He little knows as he lies there what designs we have on him."

"I think there's no doubt about it," said Edward. "He'd better go on with us, and, according to you, he would like it. We can land him somewhere as we go home."

This thought, and the word "home," brought on one of Edward's fits of impatience. He made Peter take the rudder in hand and give him the oar. Steering was not half hard enough work. Whenever Edward was idle or quiet, his restless anxiety about his father came on. He was glad to see, therefore, when they neared Upernavik, that the boats were in the davits, and everything ready to start. They found, on getting on board, that John had bought ten more dogs, even without Peter's advice. He had got a splendid show of white bearskins in exchange for tools, knives, iron hoop, and barrel staves, and had also purchased a quantity of fresh fish, meat, and butter, the two last of which articles came from Shetland, and twenty dozen ducks' eggs from the Baffin's, or Duck Islands, where the eider ducks breed in thousands. He had despatched the letters, and brought to Edward the kindest messages of sympathy and the warmest hopes for his success from the Danish governor and his lady, who well remembered the visit of the "Pole-Star" and her Captain, and had now heard of his disaster for the first time.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MIDDLE PACK.

It seemed as if summer had been left behind at Upernavik. The temperature fell to only one or two degrees above the freezing-point. The sun now set about eleven at night and rose again at one; and though twilight filled up the interval, and there was no darkness, yet the want of his

rays made it colder. The rigging was often covered thickly with large crystals of ice, which fell in showers on deck when a rope was handled, and the men were glad to wear warmer clothing. Another extract from Edward's journal will describe the aspect of things:—

“We are no longer sailing through a channel of water ten miles broad, with the mass of ice at a distance, and an occasional iceberg or fleet of icebergs floating about us, and the waves giving us an occasional heave and toss as the wind sweeps over them. As we have got more to the north, the mass of ice—the great pack—has come closer and closer to us, and we are now steaming ten knots an hour by its margin through a smooth channel that looks like a deep, calm river, the land being on our right hand, and a broad field of ice stretching away as far as we can see to the left. The sun shines out of a cloudless sky for twenty-two out of the twenty-four hours. The field of ice sparkles, and its edges are reflected in the black water; you can see the pointed tongues of ice that stretch out below the surface. Millions of birds actually darken its edges, feeding on the small shell-fish they find there. Now and then a seal pops up its head, stares round, and dives again. Here and there an enormous iceberg, stranded on the pack, rises two or three hundred feet above its level.

“The surface of the ice is not so monotonous as people fancy: it rises into hummocks, which cast shadows; it melts into black pools, which sometimes are as large as small lakes; it freezes, and the leads become bright silver rivers, glancing in the sun.

“I have not said half enough about the seals. I counted a hundred at once, one day, on the floes; each had his hole. If you look through your glass, you may see

him at ease (but always within retreating distance of his hole), and in his natural state a perfect picture of solitary enjoyment. He rolls like a horse, wriggles in a queer way, which sailors call 'squirming;' every now and then he rubs his head in the snow; now he looks just like a dog, with his head lifted as if listening; then like a great snail; then very like an Esquimaux crouching.

"I saw one day two bearded seals, overgrown monsters, eight feet long. They are at a distance; I watch them through my glass. Presently one dives; the other lies rolling on the ice, not thinking an eye is upon him. What is that yellowish-white mass stealing round a hummock? I have lost it. There it comes again, up to the top of that other hummock. It is a bear—my first bear! There is no doubt about it, and a very large bear too! He makes a dash at the poor old seal, but the seal is too quick for him: down goes the seal into his hole, and the bear after him. I watch to see how it ends: the bear clammers out again, and walks discomfited away towards the hummocks; the seal has escaped.

"We have had some splendid appearances in the sky lately. One I must describe, that I may not forget it. The sun was surrounded, at noon, by two circles of light, the first at a distance from him of 22° , the second of 40° . In each were set, at regular intervals, four mock suns, or parhelia, as they are called; those in the inner circle were as bright as the sun himself, those in the outer were fainter; the whole made a magnificent spectacle."

If the captain and crew of the "Constance" had been out on a pleasure excursion, nothing could well have been much more agreeable than all this. But it was far otherwise. They had reached the latitude of Lancaster Sound, and

could not enjoy their calm sailing through the channel, which was carrying them too far north. Changes of weather were to be expected continually. The middle of August was approaching; it was now the 12th, and the grand object was to get as fast as possible, and before the ice grew firmer, across the pack, to the westward, unless, indeed, it should be resolved to hold on to the northward and round it; but Lancaster Sound now lay nearly due west of them. If they sailed farther north to round the pack, they must lose valuable time; and as the season was already late, they might get entangled in ice, let them go as far as they might. On the other hand, the breadth of the pack is eighty miles. The danger was that they might be beset there. Many consultations took place on the subject. John took the advice not only of Macleod, but of all his most experienced seamen; Edward listened with earnest attention. Of course he was not old enough to give his opinion, but his heart always sank when the more cautious way seemed to be advocated, and grew light when the attempt to force their way westward seemed to gain favour. At last the latter was resolved upon: the great advantage of having steam to assist gave the turning-point to the scale.

The vessel's head was turned to the pack on the 13th of August, when a favourable lead was discovered and followed. There was no leisure now. Having resolved to push through, they did it in earnest. John was not a man to set about such a task mildly. The steam was kept up; the ship was brought up to the ice, and sent dashing into the midst of it when it was possible to crash through it; when it was not, all the possible means of progress were resorted to. They set the ice-saw to work; they "heave" and

"warp," and "track" and "haul;" they do battle with the ice unceasingly. Sometimes they make a prosperous advance of twenty miles in the four-and-twenty hours; sometimes they make about one mile in that time; sometimes they are beset and lie immovable, but this does not last long. By fair means or foul, they escape somehow; they blow up the ice with gunpowder; they saw, they batter; and once afloat again, the steam is up, and all the ways of getting on that can be taken begin over again. As long as they move, no matter how hard is the work that gets them on, Edward is happy; he works always among the foremost, and it takes all the authority that John's position as captain gives to make him take sufficient sleep. When they are beset, then Edward is wretched. On these occasions he resorts to his journal again; and another extract or two from it will explain some of the means of progress that have been mentioned.

"20th August.—Worse than contrary winds, worse than fogs. We did creep then; now we are beset and lie immovable. The best way is to think over the time when we *could* move; and as I hope, Maggie, you will some time read this journal—unless, indeed, we stick here for ever in the ice—I shall describe some of our ways of moving, and then you will understand our terms better. Now, then, it is the 14th. That was a capital day's work, I recollect; ice loosened all round; steam up; John stands in front of the steersman; Macleod is in the crow's nest.

" 'D'ye see any opening?' cries our captain, in a stentorian voice.

" 'Something like a lead a little to leeward of that iceberg on our port bow.'

" The light sails are got in; the ship's head is pointed

for the opening; the watch are stationed at the braces. Silence prevails.

" 'Hard a-starboard!' shouts Macleod.

" The ready haul brings the ship's nose into a sudden opening, and bangs her quarter against a great lump of ice.

" 'Steady there!'

" Not a sound for half a minute. Then comes a yell.

" 'Down, down! hard down!' And we scrape, and jam, and push, and are pushed, and somehow or other find ourselves in the dark narrow canal called a lead.

" On we go famously. We make half-a-mile—we make a mile. We believe—at all events *I* believe—that this is the straight path that is to take us to the west at last.

" Down come a succession of shouts. 'Helm a-starboard!' 'Port!' 'Easy!' 'So!' 'Steadie-ee-ee!' 'Hard a-port!' 'Hard, hard, hard!' (scrape—bang—thump!) and we are jammed fast between two ice-fields.

" But you are not to suppose we mean to stick there quietly. As soon as we have recovered our strength and temper, John begins his orders again. Two of the hands jump from the boats, each carrying an ice-anchor, and plant it in the ice, close to the crack along which we want to force our way. Peter jumps after them with his ice-chisel; and I, as his apprentice, jump after him, and we make holes for both anchors to fix in. A hawser is then fixed to the smaller end of each, the slack of which is passed round the shaft of the patent winch—an apparatus of cogs and levers standing in the bows of the ship. All is ready for heaving.

" The screw is set to work to help us; the hawser is hauled taut. Everybody is at work—captain, doctor,

master, carpenter, the mates, 'the boy'—every one is taking a spell at the 'pump-handles.' The ice yields; a lane is opened just as wide as the bows. We work with fresh energy; we jump off the boats, and shift the anchors; we go at it for two hours; and just as John tells us we've made two miles, some action of wave or current jams the ice close, and we are hopelessly beset.

"We wipe our foreheads, and stare about us in provocation. Cry of 'Bear!' from somebody—Peter, I daresay;—he is always wide awake. There he goes! walking along the floes with the leisurely march of perfect freedom, about half-a-mile off, looking as unlike as possible to the caged monster of the Zoological Gardens grovelling in his wet den. This bear, with his weighty legs and rounded back, reminded me of an elephant. He was about nine feet long; his colour, a delicate yellow, contrasted against the snow; his nose, an intense black. He seemed oppressed with a sense of his own dignity, which forbade him to move his august legs higher than was absolutely necessary.

"Off sets a party in chase of him, I among the rest; but I wouldn't have the dogs let off. I have no mind to endanger their lives in useless hunts of bears. Our adventures were anything but honourable. Allen disappeared under the ice, rifle and all; but we hauled him up, and sent him back to the ship to change his clothes. The water was at 30°, but his bath has done him no harm. We went on for a whole hour, getting repeated duckings and tumbles. I went in twice. The bear, meanwhile, never varied from his unconcerned walk, and was at last lost to view in a labyrinth of hummock-ice.

"We get back, looking foolish enough, and Peter receives me with a lecture. John also laughs at me. Upon

the whole, I think I deserve it; so I bear it philosophically. The only advantage of my absurdity is, that I am so tired that I can't help falling asleep, and so forget that we are beset.

"I am awoke from a sound sleep by the cry of 'Get ready the lines!' I jump up and find it is ten o'clock at night, and I have been asleep since six. There is a complete change in the floes; no continuous lead, but the ice is broken, thin, and frail, and Ben is out upon it carrying a forty-pound hook, to which a long white whale-line is attached. Ben tumbles over the ice, getting two or three duckings as he goes along, and plants his anchor in the firm side of a great berg, standing in the direction we want to go. The line passes inboard through a block, and with a few clever turns around the capstan its slack or loose end is carried to a little windlass. Now comes the warping: steam up, and all hands walking round to a jolly chorus of sailors' songs, and we get over a few hundred yards in no time.

"The floes are never at rest in this summer time; suddenly they open, and the ship is in a canal again. Our good screw can do the work for us now; but for it we should be out on the floes, and tow the ship along like so many human horses. As it is, we make good way, and keep at it all night, for we have light enough even at twelve o'clock; and at three in the morning John drives me down to bed. I hate to go because the lead keeps open, and we are getting on famously; but I am soon asleep and forget everything. I have not noticed what a day of enjoyment it has been for the dogs; they have been out on the floes whenever we were beset or only moving slowly, and they shall be whenever we can manage it. Olaf turns out well;

he manages the Esquimaux dogs famously, and they begin to know me too; but all I can do they won't look pleased at anything, and never wag their tails. Dogs that don't bark and don't wag tails seem very dull, and they do neither. They really never do wag their tails, but I shall not rest till I make them. But their delight, rolling on the ice and among the snow, is quite refreshing; and Trident and all his company make up in noise and bustle for the quietness of the others."

It was the 27th of August when, for the last time, the "Constance" lay imprisoned in the pack; she had nearly reached her harbour. Already the dark cliffs of Cape Osborne, the north-east point of Lancaster Sound, loomed at intervals through the drift. There were signs of open water at a few miles' distance. It was hard to be idle so near the end of the voyage; but there was more than anxiety to get free in the faces of the captain and the master, as they stood together on deck, sometimes looking up at the heavy, leaden clouds that flew across the sky, sometimes scanning the horizon with their glasses. The wind roared across the floes. Ahead and between them and the open waters of the Sound stood a threatening array of icebergs, against which heavy ice-tables were reared up, ground to atoms, and carried off on the waves; while others succeeded, to be dashed to pieces in their turn. There was something awful in the death-like stillness of the ship in the near presence of that wild tumult. The walrus were numerous, resting on the ice or floating in their holes and ploughing up the water with their tusks. These dusky monsters approach the land in storms. They came very near the ship, often within twenty feet of her. Every sail was close-reefed, everything on board was pre-

pared to stand any shock that might come; every man stood ready to do his duty when the shock came.

"Edward, keep close by me, and hold fast on a rope!" said John, in a suppressed voice.

The words were hardly spoken and obeyed, when, with a sound only to be equalled by the loudest thunder, the ice broke up, and the ship drifted before the howling gale and at its mercy. She scraped along a lee of ice of great thickness, then scudded onward among the heaving masses. One of them, upturned by the waves, rose above the gunwale, smashing in the bulwarks and depositing half a ton of ice upon the decks. The staunch little ship bore herself through the wild adventure as if she had a charmed life.

But it was on the enemy in front that the eyes of her captain were turned. Directly in front, just beyond the line of the floe-ice against which she was sliding and thumping, was the fleet of bergs. It was impossible to avoid them, the only question was, whether she would be dashed to pieces against them, or whether they might not offer some providential nook of refuge.

But as the ship neared them it was found that they were at some distance from the floe-edge, and separated from it by an interval of open water. Into this channel she was driven by the gale, when, from an eddy, she lost her headway. Almost at the same moment it became evident that the bergs were not at rest, that they were bearing down upon the floes, with a momentum of their own, and that it must be the fate of the "Constance" to be crushed between them.

John looked at Edward, who stood close to his side. Edward's face was pale as death; his lips quivered, his eyes had an expression of anguish. "My father, my father, we

cannot save you now!" These words burst from him as John's look rested on him.

A pang of agony passed through the young captain; dreadful pictures of a lingering death and of broken hearts came before him. He looked upward and around, as if for help. Above and around the storm was raging, but behind him he saw his men, firm, quiet, ready for action, ready for death.

Just then a broad, low, waterwashed berg came driving up from the east. A sudden thought dashed through him, and as the mass neared, he gave the word, and Ben, who had the strength of a giant, managed to plant an anchor in its side, and hold on to it by a whale line. The ship fell behind, and followed the mass of ice. The noble tow-horse towed her bravely on, the spray dashing over his windward flanks, and his forehead ploughing up the lesser ice, as if in scorn. Twice with a noise as of thunder did other bergs come down upon him with a shock that must have crushed the ship, and though it made him tremble, and his harness strain and groan, twice did he conquer, and bear the vessel on.

But the bergs encroached upon him, though they were driven with less violence. The channel narrowed. The yards had to be braced, and the port-quarter boat would have been crushed by the impending ice if Peter had not, with miraculous quickness, taken it from the davits. The "Constance" passed through, and got under the lee of a large berg, and into a comparatively open lead. Her crew now detached her from the brave sea-horse, which had saved them from certain death.

But scarcely had they time to breathe and congratulate each other, when a floe drove them from their shelter, and

the gale soon carried them beyond the lead. Again they were in the ice, sometimes escaping its onset by warping, sometimes obliged to rely on the strength and buoyancy of the ship to withstand its pressure, sometimes scudding wildly through the drift. On every occasion when men could possibly avert a danger by any effort, every man was ready, and many narrow escapes were made. The barricade stanchions were carried away, the boat that had been lowered for the warpings was left behind on the floes with three brave fellows in it, when a little pool of open water received the ship at last. The pool was just beyond a lofty cape that rose up like a wall, and under an iceberg that anchored itself between her and the gale.

John did not stop an instant, even to congratulate himself or his friends. He was out on the berg to look after his three men, first pushing back Edward by main force, and ordering Peter to hold him, and not suffer him to follow. He took three of his best tried sailors, used to the Greenland fishery, with strong whale-lines and boarding-pikes. Holding on with difficulty, they succeeded in gaining the other side of the berg, threw out their lines, which the men caught, hauled in the boat, and landed the men on the ice, leaving the boat to the mercy of the waves. There was a hearty cheer when they all seven appeared on the berg, and got on board again.

The men would have gone to death for their young captain at that moment, and Edward rushed to him and seized him by both hands, but could not speak. Officers and men had worked alike through this terrible time, and all were pretty well worn out. John sent them to rest after Peter and his mate had fastened two good anchors in the berg, but he and Macleod kept watch alternately. The

gale was unbroken, and the floe-ice pressed heavily on the sheltering berg, so much so as to sway it from its vertical position, and at one time to make its top overhang the ship. But morning broke, and they still lay safe.

With sunrise, however, the gale increased. About eight in the morning the precarious harbour was broken up, both the anchors gave way, and the vessel was again among the ice. The men hurried on deck to help her to fight the battle again.

Now began the nippings. The first shock took her on the port-quarter, but she bore it well, and rose by jerks on the ice. The next came from an enormous floe, irresistible by wood or iron, but the shoreward face of the iceberg that had sheltered her through the night presented an inclined plane descending deep into the water, and up this she was driven, as if some great steam screw-power was forcing her into a dry dock. Immense blocks piled against her, range upon range, pressing themselves under her keel, as if they would carry her bodily up the face of the berg, when, by some mysterious relaxation in the ice, it lowered her gradually into the rubbish, and forced her out of the line of pressure towards the shore. She was made fast in a safe harbour, and the peril was over.

Only those who have passed through such perils know how to hold at its true value the steady courage of men in the midst of them. John never forgot the manly bearing of his companions in that fearful passage between life and death, nor the unflinching glance of Edward's eye whenever it met his—at every moment except that one moment of despair. Edward scarcely knew what fear was. It was for his father that anguish had overcome him, and John understood him. They were no words of mere form, but

heartfelt thanksgivings, that rose to heaven that morning before the exhausted crew went once more to rest, and John was able to close his eyes with an easy mind.

The gale began to abate towards evening, and fell completely before midnight. On the morning of the 29th, there was a dead calm, but winter had begun; young ice covered the sea; and no time was lost in getting under weigh again to settle in a more satisfactory harbour. The screw carried them on expeditiously, making nothing of the slight impediment that the thin crust of ice presented, and by six o'clock on the evening of the 29th August, the "Constance" dropped her anchor in a quiet cove in Croker Bay. She was safe in winter quarters.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EXPERIMENTAL TRIP.

FROM the anchorage in Croker Bay a journey of about a hundred miles would lead the intended sledge-party to the shores of Jones' Sound, where they had every reason to believe the "Pole-Star" had been wrecked, and where they hoped to find her captain and crew.

The plan arranged was to travel with three sledges. One drawn by the Newfoundland dogs, and two by teams of fifteen Esquimaux dogs in each. A fourth sledge, drawn by six men, was intended to accompany the expedition on the first day's journey, and after supporting the whole party on its provisions that day and the next morning, was to leave the rest of the food it had brought safely secured from bears—*en cache*, as it is termed—and return to the

ship. A fortnight afterwards, if the expedition had not then returned, the loaded relief-sledge was to start again for the same spot, and advance, if need were, one day's journey farther, following a track to be marked for their guidance.

The three dog-sledges were to be loaded with all that was necessary for food and shelter for the party going the journey and for those they went to rescue, till they returned to the ship. The party going consisted of John himself, Edward, Peter, Olaf, Ben Fiddes, and Adam Black. The plan agreed on was to travel straight northward to the coast; on arriving there to separate, two sledges taking the westerly route as the most likely to lead to success, and the other the easterly, having appointed beforehand a place of rendezvous.

The ship was to be left in charge of Macleod and Allen. The duty of those left in her would be to repair the damage she had suffered in the storm, to house over her deck for winter, to keep her dry and in perfect order, to get up the warming apparatus, and to have every cabin and sleeping-place ready for the returning party. No opportunity was to be lost of obtaining fresh provisions; but as the birds were migrating southwards in large flocks day and night, and they did not as yet know if there were deer in the neighbourhood, success must remain uncertain.

The days had considerably shortened now. They were within three weeks of the equinox; the thermometer had sunk to 10° below the freezing-point, and a heavy fall of snow had covered the young ice on the sea and the hills ashore with one uniform whiteness.

While the ship was getting into safe anchorage Edward had employed every hour in helping the steward and Peter

to get out the stores and provisions for the sledges. Early in the morning he was at work again. The sledges had been brought up, lowered, and got ashore on to a fine broad terrace of ice that lined the beach, and was now covered with snow. Here they were to be loaded; but before this work was begun Edward harnessed his Newfoundlanders, and at the same time made Olaf and Peter harness the Esquimaux dogs, and all the three teams were tried. There was much confusion at first, but an hour's practice brought them into some order, and was sufficient to prove that they would get on very well. As to Trident and Chloe, they were already perfectly trained, and being harnessed as leaders, the other four soon followed without giving trouble, and obeyed the voice. The Esquimaux dogs, on the contrary, had to be managed solely by the whip. They dragged with wonderful strength and speed when once well in hand, but at first it looked very hopeless. They are not harnessed as the Newfoundlanders were, two abreast, but each pulls his own independent line of tough walrus-hide. They are apt, therefore, at times, to get into what looks like inextricable confusion. Sometimes a battle takes place between two of them; others join, and nothing but the unerring lash aimed at the offenders by the driver restores order. Olaf proved highly dexterous, and Peter, whose hatred at being undone made him exert himself to the utmost, succeeded tolerably. Satisfied that the dogs would do their part, Edward next employed himself in helping Olaf to give them abundance of food, and attending to his own six—a task he never allowed any one to take from him, and then returned to the sledges to help to pack them.

The sledges were to carry provisions for the six men of

the party for forty days, and for thirty-one more for fifteen days. It being reckoned, that though the search might occupy twenty-five days, yet the return to the ship, when the rescue had been effected, could not take, at the utmost, above a fortnight. The food consisted of pemmican, preserved meat, biscuit ground to powder, tea, coffee, sugar, and lime-juice. A small quantity of brandy and some medicines were added by Allen. The fuel was oil and spirits of wine. The cooking apparatus, fitted with a spirit-lamp, was very simple, the most important part being the apparatus for melting snow and boiling water. All the cups, tumblers, and spoons, were of horn; the plates and dishes, tin; knives and forks, and all other implements required, as light and as few as possible.

Every man had on a full suit of seal-skin over his usual under-clothes, with waterproof boots of walrus-hide over soft fur boots, and woollen stockings; a mask, with small slits before the eyes to protect from snow-blindness and frost-bite; and fur mittens. A second suit of all these was carried on the sledges, and a complete suit for thirty-one men more. Every man had a reindeer sleeping-bag, and thirty-one were carried besides. A large number of bear and wolf-skins were added. They carried four tents and a gutta-percha boat. A few useful tools were added by Peter. Every one had a rifle, with sufficient powder and shot. The whole outfit was chosen with the desire to avoid weight while providing warmth and sufficient food.

The sledges were about twelve feet long and sixteen inches wide, curved up at each end, with a cord passing from end to end to give spring, and made of tough, well-seasoned wood, shod with iron, and having cross-bars or battens. Light iron stanchions, dropped into sockets at the four corners, were intended to support sides of gutta-

percha, so as to form a boat or tray to enable the sledge to cross water. Fifteen Esquimaux dogs with such sledges are capable of dragging four hundred weight, and of travelling five miles an hour. The sledge for the six Newfoundlanders was loaded more lightly than the others, so as to allow them to go very fast, if for any reason it should be required.

John was still engaged with Macleod, arranging the affairs of the ship, and settling everything before his departure, when Edward asked for a moment's conversation. It was the afternoon of the first day after coming to anchor.

"Everything is in good train, John," he said; "but I see it will be impossible to have the sledges loaded, give the men a proper rest, and start before to-morrow morning."

"Exactly: that is what I intend."

"They pack capitally, and don't want me any longer, now you have got the ship safe and have spared all the men to help. I want to get out the little sledge, the 'Little Maggie,' as we call her, and take my Newfoundlanders along the ice-belt under the shore a mile or two, to look about me a little."

"You had much better rest, my dear fellow. You have worked like a tiger."

"I can't rest. I should only toss about in my hammock. I'm not half knocked up yet. We don't know how near my father may be to us, John! I hate to do anything you don't like. You and I were always fond of one another, you know; but now we are brothers in life and death! That dreadful moment, and your look, and what you saved us from, can never be forgotten by me!"

Edward's lips quivered again, and he could not speak.

John grasped his hand. "Do what you like, Edward. I would not thwart you for the world."

"It is not only impatience that makes me want to go—at least, I think not. The coast is high and rocky. A pass or opening must be found somewhere for the sledges. Peter thinks there is one beyond that headland a mile out to the westward. If I find it, I shall drive up the country a few miles and see the aspect of things, and what sort of travelling we may expect."

"Yes, this ought to be done before to-morrow, and you and Greely will do it cleverly. Of course you will take him?"

"Good-bye, then, for the present, John. We will take care to be back by nightfall."

"Mind you do! There's no moon, and the darkness will be complete."

Edward went off next in search of Peter, whom he found in the midst of the men, directing, scolding, and working—all with equal energy. He engaged to get out the Little Maggie in ten minutes, and was not behind his time. The dogs were harnessed, and they were off in ten minutes more, taking their rifles and a couple of good bear-skins.

The drive along the icy terrace at the foot of the cliffs was easy and pleasant. A deep ravine, winding through the cliffs, opened at the distance of a mile and a-half, and up it they turned. Above them the rocks rose to a great height, and in the bottom was the bed of a stream, now frozen. The passage up it was rough and difficult, and they were obliged to get out of the sledge and assist the dogs. After labouring on for a considerable time, they found that the whole of the upper end of the ravine was filled with snow, the stream in the bottom being simply the

melting of this snow in summer. It had issued from an enormous cavern of ice, which looked so strangely desolate, and yet so beautiful—all fringed with long icicles—that Edward was walking towards it to look in, but Peter would not let him.

"It's as smooth as a mirror, Master Edward," he said; "you can't keep your footing anywheres near it, and down you'd go into some deep hole, and be made into a icicle yourself. Come along back again! It's no use to stand here. The passage ain't no passage this way."

They turned accordingly, and reached the icy shore again, but they had lost an hour in this fruitless journey. At all events, it was fortunate they had proved the ravine to be no passage. They resolved to go on further, and were rewarded by finding, at the distance of another mile and a-half, a broad opening, through which the distant country appeared stretching to the northward, all white with glittering snow. They turned into it, and proceeded easily and quickly for three or four miles; then they halted to rest the dogs, and look about them before they began their way back. They were on a great plain, bounded to the north by a range of hills. Their journey might begin with ease and safety.

Edward suddenly jumped from the sledge with a wild cry, and ran at full speed to the left. Peter stared in astonishment, and then looked round: he could see nothing.

"One would ha' thought," he said to himself, "there had been a bear at his heels; and yet, too, he's not one to run away and leave me to fight for it. Whatever has he got in his head? Why, what's that? Mercy upon us!—it can never be that we've found the captain a'ready!"

And Peter stopped talking, and stood looking in amazement at the tall figure of a man in a cloak, who stood mo-

tionless on a solitary rock, and showed dark against the clear sky on the horizon. "Mercy upon us!—it never can be!" he said again; and as he said so, the figure extended his arms, as if to receive Edward, who was now very near.

Peter put the dogs in motion, and ran by their side after Edward. Suddenly the mysterious figure leaped from the rock, and disappeared.

Edward was on the spot in half a minute. Peter was soon by his side. They looked around: no one was near—not even a footmark broke the uniform smooth whiteness of the snow. There was no other rock near—no place of hiding nor shelter.

Edward climbed to the top of the rock, with the idea that some chasm might be there capable of concealing a man. No!—the top was smooth and flat, and the snow bore no marks except the prints of two small claws of a bird. The truth flashed on him at once: he had been deceived by one of those strange tricks of refraction that are so common in the Polar regions. What he had seen was a bird with wings outspread, ready for flight; and he did in truth see, as he looked up, a solitary bird flying southward. Some petrel or other bird of passage had stopped for a few minutes to rest here.

Edward sat down by the rock without speaking. The sudden dashing down of a vague hope that he saw his father before him had left him sick and giddy. Peter saw this, and tried by talking to raise his spirits.

"It was a strange thing, too, Master Edward," he said, "that you should think a bird was a man."

"Did you not see clearly the figure of a man, too?"

"Oh!—ah!—yes! But I could ha' told you many a tale to prevent your making such a mistake, if you'd have asked me. One day, now, as Joe and I was out on a tramp,

we see at a distance two men coming on, one o' them with a rifle. 'Who's there?' says I. 'I think it's Captain James and the doctor,' says he; 'I'm sure it is, indeed.' Well, we walks on, and comes up to a middling-sized black stone with a patch of snow in the middle of it. People *say* it's refraction. As to that, I don't make no remark. It's strange—that's all I can say; and in these here Arctic regions there's many unaccountable sights and sounds that we don't have in Christian countries. Any way, I'm not to be taken in by it now."

"We had better get back," said Edward; "it's no use to go any further."

Peter said he would try to find some water for the dogs, and began turning the stones that lay at the base of the rock. He had not turned many when he found some that was bright and clear, of which they lapped as much as they liked.

"Hulloah, Master Edward! where are your eyes?" cried Peter, suddenly pointing his rifle. "A bear!"

Edward looked out, and saw, indeed, a white monster coming on; but it turned and fled rapidly before it came within range of their rifles. The dogs were in the greatest excitement, and it was all Peter could do to hold them and prevent their running away after it with the sledge.

"I never saw a bear with a long sweeping tail like that," said Edward, as they saw it going away across the snow. When they got to the place where it had turned, it was evident, from the marks on the snow, that what they had seen was a white fox.

"The wind's gettin' up," said Peter, trying not to look foolish, "and I feel the snow-drift beginning very uncomfortable. We had better be going home."

But before they could take their seats a gust came

sweeping across the snowy plain, and drove the light snow in such thick showers of drift into their faces that they were nearly blinded; and when they tried to go on, they did not know which way to take. Their footmarks were covered in a moment.

"The only thing we can do is to get under the lee of this 'ere rock where the man stood on," said Peter. "The sledge is half buried a'ready, and the dogs is shaking themselves free, else they would be too."

Edward followed Peter's advice: there was nothing else for it. They could hardly find the rock, near as it was to them, the drift had become so thick. Having found it, they seated themselves under its shelter, kept the dogs close to them, drew the sledge in front, spread the bear-skins over their heads, and in this way sat with tolerable comfort and felt no cold. But the wind rose, and the drift became more and more violent. A complete wall of snow began to form on each side of them, and the bear-skins became heavy with it. The sun was near setting, and under these circumstances it seemed dark already. Edward began to feel wretchedly impatient at his forced inaction, and to think how vexatious it would be if they could not get back all night, and so delay the expedition. Happily, Peter was occupied for some time in arranging the bear-skins and quieting the dogs; but when he had succeeded he began with various provoking remarks, such as:—

"You might ha' done better than come at all to-day, Master Edward. We should have been down on the shore by this time if you hadn't have run after that 'ere man." And so on.

Edward had the greatest difficulty to restrain his temper, but only advised Peter to try to go to sleep, and not to talk, whatever he did, for there was quite enough to

bear without that. Peter accordingly remained quiet so long that Edward believed he really did sleep, though after about half an hour, when he moved again, he positively denied having closed his eyes, and then he began again:—

“They’ll be putting everything wrong, and at sixes and sevens on the loaded sledges, without me to see after ’em. I never thought we should ha’ stayed above an hour, or I should ha’ tried to advise the captain not to let you come. Pretty mess we shall be in in the morning, keeping the sledges waiting, or else having them start without us! Captain ’ull be in a sweet temper, and it ain’t my opinion as he’ll wait.”

When Peter, after grumbling and scolding for ten minutes, at last came to this, Edward lost all patience, and, starting up, stumbled over dogs, sledge, and everything, out into the wind and snow.

It was perfectly dark—inky dark—without a ray of light; the clouds hid the stars, and the cold was piercing, but the wind had gone down and the drift had ceased; still it was impossible to move in such darkness as this: they must stay where they were till morning.

“Well,” thought Edward to himself, when he saw how impossible it was to return, “it’s lucky we have the dogs and the bear-skins! We must try to sleep, and why should we not here as well as anywhere else? Then, when it begins to get light, we can go back to the ship. We can’t be above five or six miles off. I’m horribly hungry, and so, I suppose, is Peter; but, as the French say, ‘He that sleeps dines.’ So we’ll do our best, and get up fresh and strong in the morning. John may be vexed, but he is not easily made anxious about anything, and will hope it’s all right somehow. So in I go again; and if Peter will but go to

sleep, and not talk, that's all I care for. Now, then, Trident, my boy, lie on my feet, there's a good fellow, and keep them warm!"

Edward was settling the bear-skins as he spoke, one of them having slipped down over the sledge a little and left a crack open. A brilliant light that dazzled his eyes, as though bright day had suddenly succeeded to night, made him start to his feet and out again. The whole snowy plain was clearly revealed to the horizon. He looked up in wonder: a luminous arch spanned the heavens a little below the zenith, each end seeming to rest upon the earth, while pale lights rose from the horizon and streamed upwards towards it. He saw the splendid aurora borealis for the first time.

"It's wonderful!—it's splendid!" he cried. "Peter, come out!"

Peter was certainly asleep this time, for he did not answer till the third call.

"What's up now?" was heard at last.

"Come out, I tell you!"

"There's no rest in that boy at all!" grumbled Peter to himself; "he don't know when he's snug and comfortable." At these words Peter's head appeared above the rampart of the sledge. He looked up, said very quietly, "The roarer!" then jumped on his feet, and shouted to the dogs:—

"Get up, all on ye! Come along, Trident! Now, then, Chloe! Here, you Samson, leave off yawning! Lend a hand, Master Edward, with the sledge: we haven't a moment to lose! The roarer goes as fast as it comes."

"You're right, Peter, to be sure! What am I about?" and Edward bestirred himself in a moment. They were seated in five minutes.

"That's the way to go," said Peter, pointing in one direction.

"How do you know? I'm sure I don't. Let me get out my pocket-compass."

"No need o' that! Those lights are always in the south."

"Ah, yes! I remember; or nearly always. We'll trust in our luck this time. They're in the north to us at home, when they're seen, once in a way."

"Pull away! Gallop! Hurrah!"

Off they went like the wind! After a mile had been got over so, Edward put his dogs into a steady trot, and kept on another mile at that pace.

"A little bit to the right, Master Edward."

"How *can* you know, Peter?"

"Don't you see that 'ere white peak, like an old witch with a pointed cap ridin' on a broomstick? That's just at the entrance of the pass atween the rocks as we came up."

"You have a good eye, Peter—no one can deny that."

"I think I have," said Peter, "and no mistake."

"Especially for a bear!"

"That's all very well, Master Edward, but I have my own opinion on those points. There are, as I said before, sights and sounds in these parts as never comes in Christian countries. After our carpenter die'd, now, in the 'Victory,' if you'd have heard the groans and moans all round the ship you'd believe me. We all heard them: it wasn't only me."

As he spoke they turned into the rocky pass they had come up, and passed under the witch-like rock. Peter stopped talking. Perhaps he thought it was as well to avoid such topics just then. Presently they had to get out and walk, leading the dogs, for the path was difficult. The

aurora sometimes grew pale, but never left them in total darkness ; after a few minutes it always shone out again, with some beautiful change or other. The streams of light became tinted with yellow and red ; the arch broke up and formed circles and snake-like forms in rapid motion. Edward took every opportunity of watching it that the care of the dogs allowed.

"The roarer's at a new game now !" said Peter, as they turned out of the pass and reached the ice-belt on the shore at last.

"It's a rocket, Peter," said Edward. "They're putting up rockets to guide us."

Peter fired his rifle directly, as a signal they were coming. The shot was answered so instantly and near that they saw the flash.

"If I was able to believe my eyes at all, now, I should say that was our captain on that rock under the cliff," said Peter.

"Hulloah !" shouted a voice near.

"Hulloah ! Is that you, John ?" shouted Edward back.

"Yes ! Glad you're come ! You got into the drift, I suppose ?"

The last words were said as John took his seat in the sledge, and set Peter's mind at rest about getting a "blowing up," as he called it, which he was much too proud to like.

They went swiftly on. The great headland at the eastern corner of the bay, and soon afterwards the light masts and spars of the "Constance" were visible. The sight was very welcome. Edward was telling John of the good pass they had discovered, and the promising aspect of the snow for their journey.

"Here we are !" said he, in return. "Supper's ready

for you both, and for the dogs. You are all hungry enough, I dare say. Then a good sound sleep, and up at six to-morrow morning, to be ready for our start !”

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SLEDGE JOURNEY.

IT was seven o'clock on the morning of the 1st of September, exactly two months from the day the “Constance” left Aberdeen harbour, that the sledge-party assembled on the ice-belt, only waiting the appearance of their captain. The sledges were loaded, the dogs harnessed, the six men that were to draw the reserve-sledge “toggled to the warp,” as they called it. The men were in good spirits, heart, and hope. They had had a long night's rest and a good breakfast, and the weather was fine—very cold; but clothed as they were, they did not mind that.

The whole ship's company had soon collected round them. There was hearty shaking of hands. There were many kind farewells, and wishes for a quick return and a happy one. Edward kept a little apart from the rest. He tried to avoid Allen's eye when they pressed each other's hands, and said good-bye, lest he should break down, for now the hope that had supported him throughout must soon be realized or dashed down for ever! Within a period that must now be very near, he should be made supremely happy or miserable. He stood near the sledge he was to drive, close by Trident, who every now and then looked in his face, slowly wagging his tail, as if he wanted to say something that would be a comfort to hear.

A loud cheer announced the captain's appearance. He passed into the midst of the men, and held up his hand for

silence, implored a blessing on the undertaking, and then gave the order to move on. Those he was to leave crowded round him for one grasp of his hand before he went. Then they gave three cheers. Their cheers were returned heartily, and the party was off.

They went on for three hours at a steady pace, with nothing to interrupt their progress. Peter was not a little gratified to hear the captain say to Edward that the experimental trip of last night had done good service. They found that the dogs easily went five miles an hour, and that, with a short stoppage at the end of the first five miles, they had accomplished ten by eleven o'clock. The drivers of the teams were, at first, Edward, Olaf, and Peter, but their places were taken by the captain, Adam, and Norman, for the next stage. Ben despised the idea of knocking up with any length of walk that might be before him. The party with the dog-sledges rested at eleven. They sat on the sledges and had some refreshment. In order to get water for themselves and the dogs, who were all fed with seals' flesh, they had to light a spirit-lamp and melt snow, but that was easily done. They had brought food for the dogs sufficient for a day or two, but did not encumber themselves with much, feeling sure that sufficient provision for them could be shot by the men; and, indeed, on this first morning's march they saw several foxes and hares, though it was not worth while to shoot any of them, and to increase the burdens on the sledges.

The men came up with their reserve-sledge before the halt was over, and found their luncheon prepared, and a hearty welcome. They were left behind again at the second start to rest longer, and promised that they should find bed and board waiting them in the tent when they reached it for the night. The same prosperous progress was made for

another fifteen miles, occupying with its two halts nearly five hours, and then John ordered the tent to be pitched for the night. They had reached the base of a range of hills.

If such progress as this could have been made every day, the hundred miles to the coast would have been got over in five days. But it was not so. They had hitherto travelled over a wide plain admirably adapted to sledges; already the hills that rose in front of them showed very different paths—full of difficulties. The weather had been very fine, but nearly to a certainty there would occur fogs, drifts, or snow-storms, during which to move, even, would be impossible. But the party had no time or inclination to think of to-morrow's toils. Every man was occupied about the food and rest of to-day, and in good spirits and ready to set about preparing for it. A sufficient space of snow was cleared away, the tent pitched, bear-skins were laid on the ground, the cooking-lamps were brought out, snow was collected, melted, and boiled; a large kettle of good hot tea was prepared (and every Arctic traveller knows what a refreshment that is); Peter was dubbed cook; the pemmican was brought out and cut up; the bread-powder divided into thirteen portions; the plates, the cups, all that could be wanted, spread ready. While all this was going on, Edward and Olaf were busy with the dogs, feeding them and supplying them with water, and were pleased to see them stretch themselves out and go to sleep. To sleep on the snow was delight to the Esquimaux dogs, but a little shelter was provided for the others. They had a skin to lie on, and a canvas thrown over cross-sticks to shield them from the wind. John had enough to do superintending every arrangement both for sleeping and supper, and the other three men were pitching the tent, unloading the

sledges, and drawing them up in line by it. All were fully engaged, and the arrangements had not long been completed when the other sledge came in sight. The men came on steadily, singing as they stepped along, and cheered when they saw the lamps in the tent shining out in the twilight. They were not allowed to put their hands to any work. Their sledge was drawn up by the others, and they were seated at once at the feast prepared for them, and feast it was to men who had walked five-and-twenty miles, dragging a good heavy weight.

"Prince Albert never had such a supper in his life," said one.

"An invitation to Windsor would be declined," said another, putting down his empty cup after draining the smoking hot tea to the last drop, and then turning round to attack his pemmican.

"I don't care if I march five-and-twenty miles once a week all the rest o' my life, to see such a pleasant sight at the end of it as this here tent, with all o' you at the opening, and the lights behind ye, and the dogs all round. It was the prettiest sight I ever saw."

So they went on, till, having finished supper, the pipes were brought out. Then there was thorough enjoyment for an hour. Now and then one would stop smoking to tell a good story, Peter figuring as usual on such occasions; but in general there was quietude and occasional dozing.

The tent was now cleared; everything that had been used cleaned up for the morning's breakfast; the lamp, necessary to warmth, trimmed and prepared for burning all night; the sleeping-bags brought in; the tent closed carefully; boots and jackets taken off, and then every man got into his bag and lay down, by Peter's careful instruction, head to feet. As he went on placing them, Edward

could not help remembering the evening when Peter was at Fernhill, and gave the illustration with the pen and pencil laid side by side, to show how people slept in tents; and then the thought of home, of his mother, Maggie, and, above all, his father, came before him, as though he saw them all. It was well for him that he was tired out and overcome with sleep, after so many hours' exposure to the cold air, or he would have been unable to drive these visions away. As it was, he was soon stretched by John's side, as sound asleep as all the rest.

The morning broke with wind and drift, and much as they had longed to start, it was ten o'clock before they could move. When the wind fell they prepared to set out, after taking leave of the party of six who had brought the reserve-sledge, and were now to return to the ship. The sledge was first unloaded of as much of its provisions as would make up for what had been used for the party, so that the fresh start was to be made with full sledges; all the remainder of the food was carefully secured from the attacks of bears and foxes, and a tent-pole with a flag was planted to mark the place. All this done, the two parties separated and went their several ways.

The day's journey through the hills proved as laborious as that of the day before was easy. They only advanced five miles, and yet had much more fatigue to endure. Nothing, however, could exceed the courage and cheerfulness of the men, nor the docility and sagacity of the dogs. The sledges toiled up steep blocks of ice, dogs pulling up, and men hanging at the back, when the top was reached, to save them from pitching down the other side; then a loud laugh would be heard, and though the dogs and sledge were safe, the men were floundering in a snow-wreath, or stretched at full length on slippery ice. Sometimes they

had to descend into deep ravines, and cross the snowy beds of mountain-torrents ; then to climb precipitous hills and rocks, or make long rounds to avoid them. Edward was delighted with his Newfoundlanders, who were new to such work, but yet did it admirably, and he and John took a full share of all the toils.

Food and rest were very welcome that evening, and were the more agreeable as a level plain once more stretched to the northward, and the hills began to take a westerly direction. Several bears had prowled about all day, and Ben and Adam went off with their rifles after one, while the others pitched the tent, but soon returned, having missed him. They had, however, shot some foxes and hares, the former of which were devoted to the dogs, and the latter, under Peter's skilful cookery, were soon steaming away over the lamp to make soup for to-morrow's breakfast. The night was clear and cold, with the new moon like a silver bow among the brilliant stars. The aurora also was occasionally visible, darting up in streams from the southern horizon, and lighting up the whole of the expanse of snow before them. Edward lay down longing for morning, and thinking how the dogs would trot across the plain.

As he was ready first in the morning, after a good breakfast, he started with his Newfoundlanders, before the other sledges, and was half a mile in advance. He had been going down a gentle slope at a rapid pace, and was now on a flat and level surface, when suddenly he heard a loud crack and the dogs stood still. At that instant the sledge began to sink through ice, and he found he was on a frozen lake. He turned his dogs, however, and succeeded in reaching the shore just as John had reached it, by going at the utmost speed.

It was necessary to keep by the edge of this lake, instead of proceeding due north, but there was an easy and level track of ice close to its shores, along which they advanced with ease. Some rocky and difficult road had to be passed over towards the end of the day, but on the whole they found they had advanced fifteen miles. Nearly half the journey to the coast was now accomplished.

The fourth was a trying day. A storm of wind and drift prevented their travelling more than one mile. Many times during the weary hours Edward had to remember his father's lessons of courage and trust, and, after all, succeeded but ill. John did all he could to keep up the spirits of his men, by telling them his own adventures in the "Investigator," and encouraging them to tell some of their adventures; and the whole party, men and dogs, had a good rest and many hours' sound sleep. Even Edward could not help confessing next morning that he felt stronger and better in consequence; but his spirits were raised by the sight of a bright morning, or perhaps he would not have felt so.

They were off by six o'clock, and after a mile or two of quick progress, they had to round the base of a hill that rose suddenly from the plain, and were stumbling over difficult ground, when, on turning a point, first one and then another sledge came to a standstill. A number of human figures were passing along over the great frozen plain, their figures small and dark against the white snow. One idea shot through every brain at the same moment. These were the crew of the "Pole-Star" journeying southward. Edward was on foot, and at the sight he darted forwards, though his knees shook under him with nervous agitation, and with the thoughts, "Is he there?" "Shall I find him amongst them?" when John, who had got his

glass to his eye, cried out, "Stop, Edward! It is only a party of Esquimaux!"

Edward had learned to bear disappointment now. He only gave a heavy sigh.

"It is important to go among them to ask questions, and hear if they have seen anything of my uncle and his crew," said John to him. "Follow me with your team, Olaf. You must ask them everything I tell you, and give me their answers. Peter, drive after us slowly, and all keep your rifles ready, but bear any annoyance rather than quarrel. They will be friendly, I expect. Edward, mount the sledge beside me."

Before very long they saw that the Esquimaux came to a halt among the rocks.

They drove on. As they approached they saw more of them come out from behind the rocks, dotting the snowy peaks with their dark figures. There might be about five-and-twenty men. They looked wild and uncouth, and were tall and generally strong, most of them carrying lances or weapons of some sort, and were all well clothed in skins, having jumpers of the white or grey fox, and booted trowsers of bear-skin, ending in the claws of the animals. They had a number of dogs with sledges, and had picketed the dogs by their seal-skin traces to their lances, which were stuck in the ground.

A great commotion began, both among dogs and men, as John drove near. The men brandished their lances, but did nothing really hostile. At a word from his captain, therefore, Olaf dismounted and walked quickly towards them. Seeing him, the Esquimaux became still, and a tall man, who was apparently the chief, advanced to meet him.

For some minutes there was loud talking, accompanied

by violent gesticulation. Then Olaf and the chief seized each other by the hair. Any one that did not know their customs might have supposed this was the beginning of a pitched battle, but, on the contrary, it was a sign of good will. They then rubbed noses, which completely cemented the friendship.

John, now feeling quite at ease as to the reception he might expect, dismounted also, and followed by Edward, went forward towards the chief, who met him half-way. The ceremony of pulling hair and rubbing noses had to be gone through. For this John was prepared, and he submitted to it with as good a grace as he could. Edward would certainly have objected strongly at any other time, but he would have borne much worse things now, while he stood waiting in hopes to hear something of his father.

"Now, Olaf, ask the chief what I tell you to ask," said John, "and give me his answers. Say to him, Have you seen white men before?"

Olaf put the question, received an answer, and said "Yes."

Edward's hopes rose.

"When did you see them?"

"Three moons ago."

It was a long time since then—about the time of the wreck.

"How many were there?"

The chief held up all the fingers of both hands twice, and then held them up again, omitting one. Twenty-nine! Two were wanting to complete the number. Which two might it be? Edward's heart sank again.

"Where did you see them?"

"By the great water there"—he pointed to the north-west.

"What were they doing?"

"They were travelling farther on there," and he pointed again to the north-west.

"Did they speak to you, or want anything from you?"

"They wanted food, and bought walrus and seal from us."

"What did they give you for them?"

"All their dogs. They had lost their sledges and did not want them."

"Did they say where they were going?"

"No."

At a suggestion from Edward, John next asked, "Did they give anything besides their dogs?"

"They gave a jumper of one that they said was not with them, and we gave bear-skins for them."

"Where is that jumper?"

There was a great talking and noise now. Every one seemed to have something to say, and a few women appeared from behind the rocks with their children, and joined in the consultation. Olaf had to answer a great many questions. To pull hair and rub noses with several of the men, and seemed as if he would never have ended his long speeches to them.

At last he came to John and Edward, who were both in a fever of impatience, and explained to them that the jumper had been given to the chief's wife; and that she had given it to her father, who was dead; and that she and the rest of the women were some miles off among the hills with the angekok, or prophet, burying him; and that the men did not like to tell where the place was, till he had sworn that no harm should be done to the prophet or the women.

"I must see that jacket," said Edward to John; "I must see if it belonged to any of my father's crew!"

"Say we must see them," said John, "and that we swear we will not do any harm nor hurt any one."

Olaf had again a long and noisy conference; but they refused to let the women be disturbed.

"Let us try what some presents will do, John," said Edward. "We brought a parcel of knives and some other things with us."

"Well thought of," said John, and he directed Peter to bring this package. It was soon found and opened by Peter, and John first put a knife into the chief's hand, and then distributed several to the other men, giving also scissors, nails, and a few tools, till every one present had something in his hand. Great joy was shown. They laughed, jumped, and shouted, and some of them ran to bring seals' flesh from their sledges, to give in exchange; but John shook his head, and said, through Olaf, he wanted none. Still there was no movement to get the jacket for them.

"Let us try the women, Edward," said John; "what have we got for them?"

Edward brought out some bright red and blue handkerchiefs, and going forward, distributed them. The women received these gifts with rapture, laughing, dancing, and crying, as they looked at them. While Edward was struggling to get out of the crowd that had collected, he felt some one pull him by the arm, and looking down, saw a little girl holding up one of those gay handkerchiefs which he had dropped by mistake, and which she gave back to him. Pleased by her honesty, he tied it round her throat, on which a renewed shout of delight sounded from the women. Suddenly he remembered Margaret's doll

which, as it happened, he had brought, and he took it out and gave it to this little girl. She looked at it, and screamed with joy, while shouts of inextinguishable laughter resounded from all, both men and women. But when he took it out of her hand, and placed it in the handkerchief behind her head, with its face looking over her shoulder like an Esquimaux baby, the shouting and uproar were deafening.

"Try again, Olaf, to get that jumper for us," said Edward. "Ask this little girl's mother."

Scarcely had Olaf said two words to her, when she went to the chief and talked with him, and then Olaf was desired to say that the young nalegak, by which they meant the young captain, Edward, might go with the chief in his sledge and see the jumper; but the rest must stop behind.

John was averse to letting Edward go alone with this wild chief, he knew not where. But Edward would not hear of any objection. He took his seat in the chief's sledge immediately; but there was a little delay. The chief objected, through Olaf, to the young captain taking what he held in his hand; the white men had those things, and they were fearful. It was his rifle. Edward cared for nothing but delay. He laid it down, only signing that the chief should also put away his lance, which he did.

They then started. The chief, whipping up a fine team of twenty dogs, started off at the rate of seven miles an hour, along a wild pass among the hills.

They had not travelled in this way above half an hour, when Edward saw in front a group of women collected in one spot, while, on the slope of the hill behind them, there were a number of children and some dogs. All set up a wild shriek as the sledge drew near. The chief seemed to

order silence, for the noise stopped as he dismounted and beckoned to Edward to follow him. They pressed through the crowd, and Edward saw as he advanced that there was a man to whom the chief pointed and said, "Angekok," bending over a ghastly object in the midst of the women.

There, seated on the snow, his hands resting on his knees, was the corpse of an aged Esquimaux man. The angekok, assisted by the women, was building a ring of stones round him, which made a wall that now reached as high as his knees, and was intended entirely to cover him.

At this sight Edward stopped, looking nearly as pale as the dead man; but it was not at the sight of that ghastly corpse that he had turned so pale, nor that he shook so that he had to exert all his strength not to fall down; it was that the corpse was dressed in a jacket which, though tattered and soiled with dirt and grease, he knew in a moment, by the buttons, had belonged to his father.

He leaned on the circle of stones, grasped them tight, and tried to collect his senses. As he did so, a loud, discordant howl rose from the women. It was their wail for the dead, and he answered it by a moan of anguish. Then again he tried to think.

"They said this belonged to one that was not with them," he said to himself. "This does not mean that he was dead! Oh, no, my Father in heaven, it may not mean that he was dead!"

He tried to be calm. He regretted bitterly that he could not speak the Esquimaux language, but yet he felt that he could probably learn no more. Then he pulled out some trifling presents, and showed them to the woman, whom he supposed to be the wife of the dead man, making signs that he wanted to exchange them for the jacket. A

very unceremonious undressing of the corpse immediately took place, and the exchange was made. Edward laid the jacket on the sledge and got in with gestures of entreaty to be driven back. The women pressed round, talking fast to him, and laughing and pointing at him with derision, because he could not understand them, till the chief pushed them back; and taking his seat, moved off at the same rapid pace as he had come.

John was looking out anxiously, and so was Peter, when they reached the halting-place; but the pleasure of seeing Edward safely back was damped by the misery depicted in his face. He showed them what he had brought back, and at his story Peter shook his head, but John would not allow that anything was proved by it.

"You know," said he, "that your father landed safely, because he sent off the pigeon. The time that these people met his party was very little removed from the time of the wreck. Why should you torment yourself with fears that, after escaping from the wreck, he died ashore? Rouse yourself, Edward! Let us press on to the coast. We have still fifty miles to go, but the weather is favourable to-day, and we may get over twenty of them before night, if we are lucky."

Edward was cheered by John's manner, even more than by his words. They did not halt for the night till the twenty miles were accomplished; and then were one and all so tired that they slept soundly, not excepting Edward.

Again, however, a trial awaited him. A thick fog prevented above five miles of progress on the following day. While they loitered, however, Adam had shot a bear, who intruded upon the encampment, and Olaf and Peter had skinned him, and deposited in the sledge, where there was most room, abundant supplies of his flesh for the dogs;

Olaf appropriating a good share to himself, as he assisted. The next day, the seventh since the expedition started, broke fine and clear. Five-and-twenty miles only, as well as they could reckon, now lay between them and the coast, and John set forward with his party, determined to reach it before halting for the night.

The first six or eight miles were accomplished easily; but then a formidable impediment appeared in the way. A deep ravine lay stretched across the country from south-east to north-west, and at the bottom was a broad mountain torrent, which, though covered with ice at each side, yet flowed with such depth and violence in the middle, that, sheltered as it was from the winds, it was not yet frozen over. There was a consultation whether to attempt to cross it, or whether to travel up its banks and seek an easier part; and having resolved on the latter, they travelled about a mile along the top of the ravine, but then, seeing no end to it, resolved to cross. It was a great labour. They had to get out the gutta-percha boat; to unload the sledges till they were light enough to bear floating, with their own sides fastened well up; to carry the cargo they had unloaded across in the boat; and to transport the Esquimaux dogs in the same way. It was all that the strength of the Newfoundlanders could do to stem the current and cross it by swimming. In this work two hours were lost, and before the sledges were reloaded the whole party were so tired as to require rest. They halted for another hour, therefore; had food and water; fed the dogs; and then, thoroughly recruited, started again in good spirits.

"We don't give up gettin' to the coast to-night yet, for all that's come and gone," said Ben.

"Not we," replied Peter; "but, Master Edward, you

must get up and drive now. You had a tough job with the dogs crossin', and you'll knock up."

John insisted on this arrangement, and they went on without further hindrances, rapidly, till the usual dinner-hour had passed, and then declared they would not halt yet, but push on; they had got within five miles of their journey's end.

"Gain that rock you see right a-head," said John, "and then halt for the night. Greely must drive one of the teams. He's oldest, and Edward's youngest. We must think of both."

Slowly and wearily they toiled on, with the more difficulty as the ground was rapidly rising. They reached the rock—they wound round its base to get out of the wind. First one and then another, as he came round, stopped suddenly, till all were in a line. They tried to cheer; but so worn out were they, that it was only Ben who had strength to make a sound.

The sun was setting in the north-west, in a splendid sky. The frozen waters of Jones' Strait lay at their feet at the distance of about three miles, illuminated by his rays, and stretched to the horizon. They had succeeded, in spite of all their difficulties.

"Well done, my men!" said John. "Pitch the tent! A good supper and a good night's rest to us all!"

He began as he spoke to look out through his glass, and so did Edward. The coast was generally low. A little to the west, perhaps at the distance of three miles, it was bounded by hills which took an abrupt southerly direction, as if a creek or inlet occurred there. On one of these hills there rose, standing black and distinct against the crimson sky, a flagstaff, with a flag fluttering from its summit. John and Edward saw it at the same instant, and Peter's

quick eye had caught it without a glass. He had pointed it out in a moment to the others. A cheer did sound now, and a good hearty one.

Edward seized John by the arm, but could not speak at first. Then he said, "We cannot halt here in sight of that."

"It won't do to halt here," echoed Ben.

The others did not speak. Even Peter was knocked up. The dogs, relieved from their traces, were already stretched on the snow with their tongues hanging out. John took Edward's hand.

"We must not hope too much from what we see, Edward," he said. "I have not a doubt that flagstaff marks the place of the 'Pole-Star's' winter-quarters. Nothing more."

"Ah, yes! I see. After the wreck they had no flag, no means of erecting it. That is well secured by chains. We must wait till morning."

Edward sat down on the snow, gazing out eagerly at the flagstaff. While the others were preparing to rest for the night, he, generally so ready to help, still sat looking forward towards the place where there might be traces to show where his father was.

"We won't wait till morning," said Adam Black, pointing to the silent and sad figure of the boy.

"No more we won't," said Ben.

"If we could only get a lamp alight and melt some snow," said Peter, "so that all on us, dogs and men, could have a good drink, we could do it yet."

When Edward found that they meant to go on after all, he felt their sympathy very deeply.

John ordered out a lamp. A little wall of snow was built up to shield it from the wind, and a plentiful supply

of water soon melted. A small portion of brandy and lime-juice was added for every man. A canister of the best preserved meat was broken up and divided among them. The dogs were meanwhile lapping water greedily, and eating their portions of bears' flesh, and Olaf chose, as far more to his taste, to share with them. He drank at least a gallon of water, and sat on a stone eating a long strip of bear, which he had wound up in a ball, and then putting one end into his mouth, let it unwind down his throat.

"Only just look at him!" said Peter to Ben. "None of us couldn't do that, for all we think ourselves wisest."

Ben gave a grunt. He was half asleep, and had got his pipe in his mouth besides.

"We shall have moonlight for an hour after the sun sets," said John. "Spread the bear-skins on the snow. Let six sleep, well covered, while one watches for a quarter of an hour. He shall then have his turn for another quarter. I take the first watch."

"My pipe's not out," said Ben. "Lie down, Captain. That would be a proper game!"

The weary sleepers heard and knew nothing till Ben's voice called them—"Time's up!"

"Lie down, Ben, and have your turn."

"Look at the moon!" was his answer. "I don't want no turns."

The moon was indeed declining, though still high. Ben had watched the half-hour. They roused the dogs and harnessed them. Edward's heart smote him as he woke up Trident; but the fine fellow shook himself, and licked his master's hand, as if to say he forgave him. They went on, feeling stiff and aching at first; but after the first few hundred yards they got into a quick, regular pace, and never stopped till they reached the foot of the flagstaff-hill.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FLAGSTAFF AND THE CAVE.

"HALT here, my men!" said John. "Pitch the tent and get supper ready, while I walk up the hill. Edward, you will go with me, I know."

The orders were obeyed as quickly as the tired men were able, and the two cousins set off together. The wind freshened as they drew near the top of the height, blowing very cold. The moon was near setting, but the aurora occasionally threw up pale gleams of light, and the stars were brilliant. They could see at their feet a narrow inlet of the sea, now entirely frozen, and occasionally could distinguish the opposite shore of this inlet or creek. It was an admirable harbour. At length they stood under the flagstaff. John lighted a small lamp he had brought, and they examined it closely. There was an inscription on it, written on a tablet, nailed to the wood. Edward read it aloud, as follows:—

"May 28th, 1845.

"The 'Pole-Star,' discovery ship, has lain at anchor in the harbour below since the 6th of September, 1844. All hands, with their captain and officers, are in good health. They have made extensive sledge-journeys to the north-west during last autumn and the present spring, but have heard no tidings of Sir John Franklin. The Esquimaux who live on these shores during summer, and migrate southward in winter, have never seen a ship nor a white man before. Ice of extraordinary thickness lies to the north-west, entirely blocking further progress of the ship in that direction. It is therefore my opinion, that though there is open water beyond, no ship can have passed into it

by this channel for many years. I have therefore resolved, if I am permitted by Him who orders all, to return home without further search, as soon as the ice breaks up and I can get out of harbour. I leave this document as a record of our stay here, and as a grateful memorial of our preservation in life and safety up to this time through many dangers, humbly hoping that it will please Him to whom we owe all to restore us to our homes.

“HENRY ARMSTRONG.”

Who can describe Edward's feelings as he read this record, written little more than three months ago by his father's hand? “He was coming home, then! But for the calamity that occurred, he would perhaps have been safely at home by this time!”

“How far has he gone from this spot?” said John. “If we only knew that!”

“The Esquimaux said the party they met were going to the north-west. They pointed that way. What could be the reason for going farther?”

“There must have been some reason. Perhaps to seek provisions. Did you observe by what that Esquimaux chief said that the white men had rifles? I was much relieved by that, though I did not like your giving up yours. We must go down now. The wind pierces one through.”

Supper was ready when they entered the tent, and their news was eagerly listened to. Edward had found it difficult to eat, and now could not sleep for some time; but when at last sleep came, it was sound, so very tired was he.

After the lapse of a few hours he started up, with a consciousness that some unusual sound had awakened him.

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JOHN AND EDWARD FIND A CAIRN.



The lamp was alight. He looked at his watch. It was two o'clock. He disencumbered himself of his sleeping-bag, went to the opening of the tent and looked out. He found that a north wind was blowing hard, and the aurora had become much more brilliant, but he could see nothing near to account for the sound, whatever it was. He closed the tent because of the extreme cold, and Trident, who had been asleep at his feet, came to his side, and listened also with erect ears.

There! It came again. The sharp crack of a rifle-shot at some distance, but near enough to be distinctly heard! He looked out again, but though the aurora was brighter than before, he could see no one near.

Perhaps some one had gone out and been attacked by a bear. He counted the sleepers stretched on the ground. They were all there. The blood rushed to his face with the thought that the shot must have been fired by some of his father's party. Esquimaux, even if any were near, have no fire-arms.

He awoke John, and told him what he had heard. John agreed with him that some of the lost party must be near, and advised him to go out and fire his rifle immediately, as a signal; which he did, and listened attentively, but no signal in answer was returned.

"It is vain for me to attempt to rest, John," said he, returning to the tent. "It is almost as light as day. I must go out and find what it means. I should like to take the little sledge, with Trident and Chloë in it, and drive in the direction the shot came from."

"I quite understand what you feel. The men are quite knocked up. We were out very late, and I must think of their power to go back as well as to go on. But you shall not go alone; I will go with you."

"That you shall not, Captain," said Peter, sitting up in his bag. "We can't spare you, and if you knock up what's to become on us all? I shall go. I'm wonderful rested, for I've slept sound, and a man of my age does with less sleep than you youngsters; that's a fact, don't you see."

All this time Peter was getting out of his bag, dressing himself, and pulling on his boots. Then he set a pot of coffee to boil on the lamp, talking to himself all the time.

"The coffee 'ull warm us. I shall go and get the little sledge untackled." Then aloud, "Go and harness four o' the dogs—if you think proper, that is—Master Edward."

Edward squeezed John's hand; told him old Greely was the best helper he could have, and that more than two could not sit in the sledge without inconvenience. "Go to sleep again, John, if you can;" and with the words he was out harnessing Trident, Chloe, Samson, and Lion, as the four strongest of his dogs.

"Here's the sledge, sir," said Peter, dragging it forward. "Put 'em to."

Peter then went back to the tent, and returned in a few minutes with water for the dogs, and a cup of coffee and some biscuit for Edward. "Drink it, sir," he said; "never mind whether you can. I've had mine while the water was meltin' for the dogs."

He next went in for a bottle of brandy, a canister of meat, a spirit-lamp, and three or four bear-skins. All these he put in the sledge, saying half to himself, "Who knows but what whoever's nigh may be half starvin'." They were off as soon as all was ready.

The wind blew fiercely in their faces, with occasional drift when they turned the side of the hill. They drove on for half a mile.

"What's the matter with Trident, Peter? Let me get out. He pulls, and won't obey my word."

Trident was snuffing at the ground, and dragging at his traces towards the rough ice on the shore.

"What's the matter with ye? Go on, then," cried Peter.

"I don't understand it. There must be something in it. Let him have his way. Go on, Tri, my poor fellow, then," said Edward, patting his head.

Trident, allowed to do as he liked, began to drag the sledge right towards the icy sea, and Edward made the others follow. He and Peter walked by the side, taking care of the sledge, which was often in danger from the roughness of the shore. Sometimes they passed over blocks of ice ten or twenty feet high, but generally Trident led them with wonderful care through intricate winding ways, smelling and snuffing all the time. At last they got on comparatively smooth ice, and both took their seats in the sledge again. The wind roared round them, sometimes driving showers of sleet in their faces. Still Trident held on. They had fixed their eyes on something white and glittering in the distance, that sometimes appeared and sometimes went. The dogs stopped suddenly. A sound, louder than the wind, that had been heard for some minutes, had increased to a continuous roar. Edward was on his feet and by Trident, who trembled all over and leaned heavily against him. The other dogs had lain down.

That roar could be mistaken no longer. It was the dashing of waves. The ice to seaward was breaking up before the gale, and the breakers were foaming nearer and nearer every instant, their white points flashing like hungry flames in the light from above.

With desperate efforts Peter and Edward together turned the dogs. The ice had begun to crack all round them with loud explosions.

"Get in!" screamed Peter.

"Not without you, and the ice will not bear us both," said Edward.

Peter took him in his arms with a force he could not resist, seated him on the sledge, threw himself full length on the ice, seized one runner of the sledge, and joining in Edward's shouts to the dogs got them into rapid motion. In a few minutes they were dragged into safety. They stopped only to let Peter get in, and not again till they had reached the rough ice on the shore. Here they drew up, exhausted and breathless.

"You have saved my life, Peter," said Edward.

It was seldom Peter had no words, but this time he had not for a minute or two, and then he only said, "Thank God! thank God! Master Edward."

They had got under the shelter of a great block of ice; and lay there to rest for a little while, wrapped in bear-skins. Trident began to wander about with his nose to the ground again.

"You may snuff as you like," said Peter. "I won't go on the sea-ice again for any o' your tantrums."

But Trident was pulling quite in the opposite direction now. Edward unharnessed him, and asking Peter to wait by the sledge and the other dogs, took up his rifle and followed the way Trident led. He had not far to go. They stopped by a great mass of something lying on the snow. Edward started and pointed his rifle. It was a large bear. But it lay immovable. It was dead.

Here, then, was the explanation of Trident's strange behaviour. This bear had been on the ice. Trident had

followed its track there, and ashore to the place where it was shot. That was all!

But shot! By whom? Yes; that was the shot he heard; but who fired it? and whoever fired it, where was he gone?

Edward shouted to Peter, who came on with the sledge, and advised that they should both fire, which they did, but there was no answer, except an echo which rang through the rocks near. They then shouted as loud as they could, and the echo returned their voices, but no answering shout came.

The dogs had got into an excitement about the bear, and could with difficulty be kept away from him—all but Trident, who had his nose on the ground again.

"It must ha' been something besides the bear he smelt," said Peter, "for the bear couldn't walk two ways at once; and he's going quite a new way now. If only there wasn't such a wind we should see footmarks if any one had been nigh, but you see even the bear's is all gone with the drift."

They walked on, following Trident. Suddenly he stopped, took something in his mouth, wagging his tail and making sounds that Edward knew as expressing his strong affection for any one he was fond of. He dropped what he had seized at Edward's command. Edward took it up and held it in the light. The aurora was shooting up more brightly than ever. What he held was a fur glove, and it seemed to him that he recognized it as one his mother bought. He was staring eagerly at it when the aurora suddenly disappeared and total darkness succeeded.

Clutching the relic in his hand while Trident leaped up with violent efforts to regain it, Edward cast his eyes upwards in despair, and made an inward cry for Light! light!

But no light came. Even the stars were obscured. He stood motionless.

"We must get ourselves into our sledge as well as we can," said Peter, "and make the dogs lie on our feet, and cover up well with bear-skins. There's no other way to keep from freezing."

Edward obeyed. The dogs lay quietly down—all but Trident, who was so restless that Edward was obliged to give him the glove. He placed it between his paws, laid his nose on it, and became quite still.

Now that Edward had time to think, his thoughts half maddened him. It seemed as if his father must have been here, for he could not doubt this was his glove by Trident's excitement. And yet this might only be like the coat, some relic of him in possession of another. Then, how was it that all signals were in vain—that no answer came, when some one who fired that shot must be near? Perhaps his father was lying mangled and senseless somewhere on the snow.

Edward sprang up and had one foot out of the sledge as the thought occurred. The darkness was still complete.

"What are you about, Master Edward?" said Peter.

"I am going to get out Trident, to keep fast hold by his harness and let him lead me. If my father is near he will find him."

"That I will not consent to. We are near rocks, I saw that. You may fall down a precipice. The roarer may come back, and if it don't it can't be far off the dawning o' morning now."

Edward yielded, but with an inward moan. After an interval he looked out, and, oh blessed sight! saw a streak of red on the horizon, and very soon the first grey light of dawn began to creep over the snowy plain.

Peter looked out and agreed that they might move now, and that it would be best to leave Trident free. Trident gave up the glove to Edward, but continued to whine and jump at the pocket that contained it for some minutes; when suddenly he seemed to forget it, and to be absorbed again in smelling the ground.

They followed him. At last he went up to a steep rock, against which the snow had drifted to a considerable height, and there he stopped.

They looked up and down and on every side, and could see no sign of any one near. But Trident began to scratch up the snow, whining and giving short barks, and Chloe, seeing what he was doing, joined him. The two dogs dug and scratched violently, becoming more excited as they went on, and making the snow fly in a shower behind them. Edward, seeing that Trident must have some purpose in what he was doing, began to help with the butt end of his rifle, and Peter joined. They had soon dug a hollow in it.

"Listen, Master Edward!" said Peter, holding his arm.

Edward stopped. There were hollow sounds of blows upon the snow from the other side, Trident barked loudly, and dug with greater energy than ever. Edward struck desperately.

"Be on your guard, Master Edward! It will give way directly, and a bear may jump out!"

Edward did not heed the words, but went on striking madly. It was growing lighter, and the snowy wall shook visibly; the dogs had undermined it, and in another moment it fell, disclosing the arched entrance of a cave, and the figure of a man behind the crumbled snow. The face was pale and thin, and muffled up in fur, but the eyes

were visible. Edward would have known them among ten thousand. It was his father. Edward leaped over the snow, and they were locked in each other's arms in a moment.

"My boy! my Edward! Oh, my God! am I mad, or is it true?"

Edward heard the words, and clasped his father tighter and tighter. All the world was forgotten, only that he had seen his father's face again and heard his voice. He looked up and tried to see the face once more, but it was quite dark. His father had staggered back against the wall of the cave. As he looked, all became light suddenly; he did not think how or why, only that his father's eyes were fixed on him. He tried to speak, but nothing came but a cry.

"Your mother! your mother! tell me?"

Edward thrust his hand into his jacket, and brought out a little packet which he always wore round his neck. It was a letter from her to his father. It fell at his feet. To get it out was the last effort he was able to make. All strength forsook him at once. He sank first on his knees, then on his side, and lay stretched on the ground.

Captain Armstrong knelt beside him with a face of love and anxiety, and hastily unfastened his collar, and got off his cap, feeling his hands and parting the long hair off his forehead. Trident had been leaping on him without his perceiving it, and now began to whine and to lick Edward's hand.

"Let him lay!" said a voice—Captain Armstrong did not know or even think whose it was—"He has had no rest day nor night for long, and has done the work of ten men this night. He will do well if he can sleep."

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EDWARD DISCOVERS HIS FATHER.



The two men watched for a little while, and soon Peter had melted some snow over the lamp which he had lighted, and brought water; and when they had moistened Edward's lips and bathed his forehead, and at last made him swallow a little, they saw, to their relief, that though at first he lay in a sort of swoon, this state changed into a soft and sound sleep.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AWAKING.

"FATHER!—my own father! Have we really found you?" were Edward's first words, when, on waking, he saw who was sitting by him on a fragment of rock, and found what hand it was he had clutched so tightly in his sleep. Suddenly he shook down his bear-skin, and started up, saying, "But John! We must go and tell John!"

"Greely set out three hours ago to bring John here," said Captain Armstrong. "They will soon be back."

"Why! have I been long asleep?" Edward asked, wonderingly.

"Only about nine hours. You fell asleep at four this morning, and it is one in the afternoon now. But lie down again, my boy! you are not half rested yet. You must not move till you have had something to eat."

It was true. The exertion of moving had brought back a dizziness, which seemed to deprive Edward of all power to think or feel beyond the one joy that his father was near him. He was soon taking food, and drinking a bowl

of hot coffee. It was so delightful to receive these from his father's hands, that he could not find strength to say he was grieved to cause fatigue and trouble, instead of saving it, as he wanted to do; and when he at last said something of the kind, his father replied in a tone of the greatest affection:—

“I love to help you, my boy!—my boy, who would have given his life for me ten times over!”

“Where are all your men, father?” said Edward, beginning to recover himself entirely; “are they safe?”

“All safe and well when I left them four days ago; but they are forty miles off.”

The full happiness was beginning to fill Edward's heart: his face brightened up; he felt perfectly well; but his father kept hold of his hand, and told him to lie still. “We can talk best so,” said he.

Trident was lying by them, and seemed perfectly happy by the side of the two people he loved best in the world, and tried to say so, if only he could.

“Pat him, father! He found you for us.”

“I know that: Peter told me.”

“Oh, father, I cannot tell you all Peter has done for us! I am sure he did not tell you that.” And Edward rapidly told his father of the adventure on the ice.

“I shudder when I think of your danger. His behaviour was grand indeed!”

“Tell me what happened last night,” said Edward. “Did you talk much? Did Peter tell you all about us?”

“When I had collected my senses enough to find out that Peter was by me—for at first I only saw you—I was obliged to let him help me for a time; and afterwards I

made him lie down and sleep. He was sinking with fatigue. This morning he has answered some of my questions. He told me about the "Constance" and your sledge-journey; but about ten o'clock I sent him off in the sledge to bring John and his party."

"What can they be doing? I long for you to see John! He's the best fellow in all the world, and I love him like twenty brothers. But, father, why were you here alone?"

"I was not alone; I had a poor wounded man with me—one of my men; he lies there now asleep in the inner part of the cave; and I trust that now Greely and I have dressed his wounds, and he has been refreshed with the food, and, above all, the water and tea he has taken, he will recover. But for your coming he would have been dead now."

"Poor fellow! How was he hurt?"

"He was attacked by a bear. I had brought him with me from our hut, which is forty miles off, as I told you. My purpose was to post up at our winter-quarters a notice of our locality there, before the weather became too severe to travel, that any rescue-party which might come next spring might find us. I never dreamed of the possibility of a rescue now. I sent the pigeon as a forlorn hope, but it was scarcely a hope with me; and besides, it was so late in the season when I sent him, that before a ship could be ready or a party got up—even if he did arrive safely—it would be too late to reach us this autumn. So I reasoned, and naturally. I had full confidence in your coming next spring. Often I have said to myself, 'I know he will come!'"

Edward felt too much to speak.

"But you ~~wanted~~ to know why I was in this cave. What

I had meant was to get to our winter-quarters last night. We had a small depôt of provisions there, landed in the course of the winter ; we were detained, however ; our day's journey had been long and difficult, and we were obliged to rest about two miles off. The aurora enabled us to start about one in the morning, and push on for the winter-quarters, as we were exhausted with hunger. On the way we diverged on to the sea-ice, to try to shoot a seal, but he escaped."

"Did you fire, then?"

"No ; we never got within gun-shot of him ; but Trident was right in tracking me there."

Edward had his arm round the fine fellow, and was praising him again.

"We turned off the ice, got ashore, and almost instantly Tom Bolt—my poor fellow that lies there—was seized by the bear. I fired, and believed I had killed the monster ; but while I was raising poor Tom I heard a growl, and saw my work had only been half done. I fired my second barrel, and the bear fell dead."

"Yes ; you fired two shots only, then?"

"Only two. I found Tom was quite unable to move : he could not stand. I had no resource but to carry him in here ; and, weakened as I was with fatigue and hunger, it was all I could do, for he is a strong, heavy man. To save us from being frozen to death, I was obliged, as soon as I had laid him down in the most sheltered part of the cave, to build up the entrance with snow, for the wind was howling in."

"That was why you heard none of our signals."

"Yes ; the snow makes an impenetrable barrier against sound. You see we have filled up the opening now with skins, and we hear the wind now and then. The first thing

that aroused me from a sort of stupor into which I had fallen from cold, hunger, and fatigue, was the sound of Trident's bark. No wonder that when I saw your face I believed I was mad."

A hundred questions and answers followed. They talked about home, about the voyage, about the ship, and the hopes that opened before them, till anxiety about John and why he did not come began to disturb them. Edward had already got up, and was sitting by his father, who now told him that he would find a pool of water at the farthest end of the cave, where he could have the refreshment of a bath if he liked; and Edward gladly ran off to take it. On the way he passed poor Tom, who lay asleep, and could easily see, by the comfortable pillow they had made for him, and the way the bear-skins were arranged about him, how carefully his father and Peter had done their nursing. All the world seemed bright to Edward this morning, and so he felt no fears about anything. Tom would soon be well—so he believed—and he proceeded to enjoy his bath.

He had to hurry on his clothes again, for he thought he heard a cheer. He listened;—yes, certainly, he heard a cheer! He ran out, bright, well, and as strong as ever; he met the fresh cold air as he got into the outer part of the cave, and he saw John bound over the snow at the entrance, and rush in with a face more joyous than even his face ever looked before, and seize his father by both hands, and heard their hearty, affectionate greeting. Behind, through the opening, he saw the whole party, Peter and all, the loaded sledges, the dogs;—they were all together now.

John and Edward had been brothers in trial and danger; now they were brothers in happiness. How they shook each other by the hand, and congratulated each

other! Then all the men came in to see "the Captain" they had so often talked about and had come to save. There was nothing but rejoicing—only, at least, one sad thought, poor Tom Bolt! They were all going to him, but Captain Armstrong only took one at a time, and would allow no noise near him.

When they had calmed down a little, and had time to sit quiet and think what had better be done, it was resolved to pitch the tent close to the cave, and under the shelter of the rocks, to rest during the remainder of the day, have a jolly supper and evening, and not think of moving till the morning. John and his party had already had some fatigue. They had, it is true, slept till seven o'clock, before, one after another—John first of all—awoke with the anxious question, "Where are Edward and Peter?" Parties of two hurried out in various directions, but none chanced to go the right way; and when Peter reached the tent they were all out but Adam, who was left to guard it. Adam went out, fancying he knew which direction the others had taken, but missed them; and when they came in he had to be waited for. At last they loaded their sledges and came on to the cave.

Their supper and evening were indeed jolly. There was abundance of laughter; and as they had left the cave quiet, to be poor Tom's sick-room, well warmed with a lamp, and shut in with bear-skins, they had no scruples as to noise, and made a prodigious one. If any bear on his road home happened to pass that way, he must have wondered what was going on there. Many jokes were passed at Captain Armstrong's fashionable appearance, and he, in return, told them they were a set of dandies. He was a strange, shaggy, rough figure, his clothes being made of different skins; patched together with the utmost skill of

his men, it is true, but still very wild and strange. John and Edward both saw that he looked thin and haggard, but they would not say anything to mar the happiness of the evening, and promised themselves he should look better soon. Peter did tell him he looked "wonderful bad," but no one took any notice.

He led John and Edward aside before he settled for the night, to fix their plans as to the journey back to the ship.

"I long," he said, "to go to my brave fellows, and tell them we are rescued. They have behaved with the greatest courage in every trial, and borne all, even with cheerfulness. My plan is to go to them with Edward alone, and bring them on to you, John. It would be a waste of time and strength to take the whole party and loaded sledges."

"But as to provisions?"

"We have abundance at present. The journey from this place is forty miles. I can point out to you a certain hill, at the distance of twenty, to which if you will travel and encamp, Edward and I will bring all my party. Poor Tom must go with you on one of your sledges."

It was finally agreed to do as Captain Armstrong proposed. The little sledge, with the six dogs, would take him and Edward rapidly over the forty miles. By starting early and resting in the middle of the day, half the journey could be accomplished in one day; the rest on the next. The only load they should have to carry would be the small gutta-percha tent to encamp for the night, the suits of reindeer-fur clothing for all his men, which would be very acceptable on their journey, and some tea, sugar, lime-juice, and biscuit, which would be luxuries, besides

sufficient provision for themselves and the dogs on the way.

John was to make for the appointed hill, and there wait. One of his sledges could be emptied, as the other two would easily carry the provisions that remained; and the wounded man could be laid, well defended from cold, on it, and dragged by the men.

All this arranged, they settled for the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LITTLE MAGGIE.

ALL were astir by four o'clock, and the little sledge, with its handsome team, was packed and ready by five. Edward and his father took their seats immediately, and were off, all the party they left watching them as long as they were in sight. It was a fine morning, and the sun was near its rising among gorgeous-coloured clouds. To their right lay the blue sea-ice; to the left, as they drove along the tops of the cliffs, stretched the snow-covered plain. To Edward's eyes, the whole desolate scene looked like Paradise, he was so happy.

Trident seemed to know perfectly well whom he was drawing, and never went so splendidly before. Captain Armstrong praised the sledge, the dogs, their training, and the way in which Edward managed them—much to Edward's delight. It was such a new feeling to him to be light at heart, to have no galling anxiety for ever weighing upon him, that he felt as if he must jump out of the sledge and rush on faster than the dogs could go, and sometimes he did.

He had told Peter before he started, what was true, that the only thing not quite right with him was, that they two who had up to this time always been together when anything had to be done, should be separated now.

"Still, Master Edward, it's best, though," said Peter. "Three would be too many for the sledge; and besides, I shall be none the worse for the rest. When the Captain was wroppin' me up last night, and puttin' me to sleep like a baby, I says to myself, 'You must be dead beat, old fellow, or you'd never stand this!' We shall have an easy journey to the halting-place, and I shall be all right, don't you see, by the time you come up."

"Yes, yes, Peter, that's all very well; but if you had thought you could help us in any way, you would never have thought whether you were tired or no; but you think we have nothing but plain sailing before us now."

"Well, I hope so, Master Edward. I think we've got into smooth water, leastways not such very rough ice. But don't you be runnin' into dangers now, nor gettin' frost-bites, through any o' them careless ways I've seen in you!" Edward laughed, and so they parted.

Now, once more alone with his father, he found that there were still endless things he wanted to know. Captain Armstrong had refused, from the first, to tell him about the wreck, because he would not spoil their happiness with dreadful recollections; but he willingly told him all that had happened during the three months that had passed since.

"We had saved nothing but about ten rifles, some ammunition, our dogs, and the pigeon," said he. "I brought Launcy ashore inside my rough coat, after all my crew had left the wreck. But we were not swallowed up in that boiling and surging abyss of ice and water, in which every

fragment of the ship soon disappeared. Our lives were saved. That was the first feeling. Afterwards came thoughts dreadful enough. I went a little apart from the rest; we had got under the shelter of some rocks out of the gale that still raged; I sat alone and forced myself to think of what must be done to save those thirty lives confided to my care. The whole course I must pursue came rapidly and in order before me, but that day all we could do was to creep into holes and corners of the rocks, and seek rest. We were spent with toil and hunger, but it was impossible to shoot birds or anything else till the gale abated.

"I awoke after some hours, and found that a calm had succeeded the storm. It was midnight, but the sun was above the horizon. Then it was that I wrote the note to your mother in pencil on a leaf of my pocket-book. There were not many words beside the 'We are wrecked' that you made out. I told the latitude and longitude of our disaster."

"It would have been a great comfort to us to know that," said Edward.

"Yes; but guided by the Esquimaux, you found us wonderfully soon. I did not send off the bird at once. I waited till nearer his natural time of awaking. Then I fed him on a little biscuit that one of the men chanced to have in his pocket, and let him drink at a fresh pool I found. I had fed him also the night before in the same way. You saw what I tied on my note with. Here is the other half of the chain. I have always kept it."

"My father! my dear father! how different it all is now! Think of that time and of this!"

"Yes, indeed! I never, as I told you, was so wild as to hope for a rescue this season. I despatched the pigeon to

try to ensure one next spring ; but I always believed—felt certain, I may say—that you would come next spring, whether the pigeon reached you or not.”

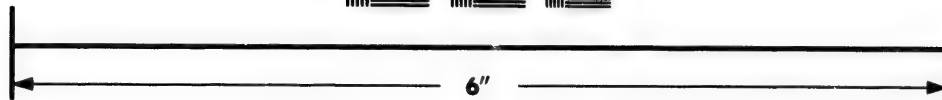
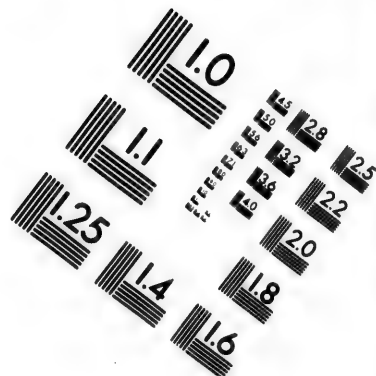
“You were right. I had always resolved that you should not have a third winter to spend in the ice.”

“I fastened on my piece of paper as well as I could, but I always knew that in the long flight there was great risk of its being lost. Still, I could do no better. When it was done, I climbed to the highest point of rock I could find, and held him up at arm’s length. It was a long while before he started away. He fluttered on my arm, took many short flights, and returned. It was an hour at least before he rose in the air, flew round in a large wheeling circle, rose so high as to be nearly lost to my eyes, and then began a steady flight to the south-east. I think that moment when I lost sight of him was the bitterest I have yet experienced, though I had accomplished this important object. I had launched him into an illimitable waste, most likely to perish ; or if he reached home, what a messenger of sorrow would he be ! Then came the recollection of our home to which that little fading speck was journeying, and which I should never—so I felt at that moment—see again. I seemed to see you and your mother in your anguish, and my little Maggie’s soft hands caressing him, and her tears dropping on him !”

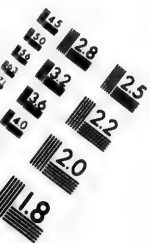
“How like the reality was !” said Edward. “It was what really happened.”

“Some beautiful lines of poetry that I once heard that dear little Maggie repeat came back to me at that moment :

‘There is a power, whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—
The desert and illimitable air,—
Lone, wandering, but not lost.’



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It is strange the strength and energy that returned to me. I went among my men ; told them of the messenger I had despatched ; detailed my plan to them, and told them what my hopes were. They came round me, engaged to obey my orders in everything, and to do all their part towards maintaining our lives. I then, together with Mr. Wilson, our surgeon, went out in search of food, and we soon brought in a seal ; collected dry moss and cooked it by the aid of the oil, and breakfasted on it. We had no difficulty about getting fire ; most of the men had their pipes and some matches. Poor fellows ! they have had to learn to do without tobacco since. Water we found abundantly. In short, I knew we could easily subsist in summer, as we had rifles. To prepare for winter was the great object. You will see how we succeeded when I take you into our hut."

"When was it that you parted from the others ?"

"We knew of two places to the westward where millions of sea-birds breed. That was our destination ; but in travelling towards it a doubt arose as to which was best. I pushed on with one of the men to choose. While we were absent the others met with a tribe of Esquimaux, who were migrating to the east, and bartered with them for food, giving our dogs in exchange. I had directed them to do so if any opportunity offered."

"But your jacket, how did they come by that ?" and Edward told all the story of his sufferings about it.

"That happened in the simplest way imaginable. Philip Stewart, my first officer—a fine fellow, whom you will like, Edward—had his clothes torn to shreds in escaping from the wreck ; so I gave him my jacket, as I had my rough coat over it, having been on deck many hours, and he exchanged it with the Esquimaux for several reindeer-skins

and a jumper for himself besides. The jacket was too thin for our life here."

"Oh, yes! It was a good exchange, and now I see how it all happened."

The hours flew in this and much more discourse. The letter Edward had brought from his mother had been an indescribable comfort to Captain Armstrong; still the thought that nearly a year must pass yet before they could be home often made him anxious for her. But he would not yield to anxiety. Edward wished for another messenger as good as poor Launcy, and longed that his mother and Margaret could but share his joy. To him, the whole journey, the halt at noon, pitching the tent at night, waking in the morning, starting again, all was one continued joy; and he found himself seated on a large stone, sketching, just in his old way, their little tent with the dogs and sledge by it, and his father standing looking out at the setting sun, before he recollected how long it was since he had been able to draw a line.

An hour after sunset on the second day they turned into a ravine or pass, which reminded Edward of that by which they left the shore of Lancaster Sound. The moon gave light enough to go on with safety.

"We are approaching the coast, I suppose?" said he.

"Yes, we are near our rocks, but they are all deserted now. The birds have migrated to the south."

"Are we very near the hut?"

"Yes. Do you see that shadow on the snow? That is cast by the rock that shelters it."

"Now I see two little dome-shaped buildings like large beavers' houses stuck together. That's the place, I suppose. Much too splendid to be called a 'hut.' Does that light come from the window?"

"Yes. That is the light of our lamp shining through a sheet of ice that makes our window-pane. Our hut is built of rough stones, but you see it is coated outside with snow to make it warm. Now draw up at the door, unharness the dogs and keep them close, and follow me in with them."

Edward drew up at the end of a long narrow entrance, built in imitation of the Esquimaux, and fastened up by a door of walrus hide. His father went round to the window and tapped three times, then stood by him at the door. It was unfastened from the inside in half a minute, and a strong voice exclaimed:

"Why, Captain, you've made good speed! We never hoped for you before to-morrow!"

There was only room for one to pass along at once, so having opened the door the speaker turned back quickly, stooping low, for the passage was not five feet in height, talking all the time, saying, "Here's the Captain and Tom all right, mates! They're all at home, Captain, and glad they'll be to see you." Captain Armstrong followed close, and as Edward emerged into the room at the end, and stood upright by his side, said in as loud a voice as he could command, "My son has come to rescue us!" His agitation was so great that he could say no more.

But it was enough. There was a wild cry of joy and surprise. Those strong men, who had borne their hardships and dangers without a complaint, who had faced death without fear, and were looking forward to a winter of perils and sufferings with cheerfulness, yet felt the full blessing of the rescue. Home, friends, life, and happiness were in the words. They surrounded Edward and his father; many a rough face was bathed in tears; many a voice was choked with sobs. On every side he heard blessings. His hands were grasped;

his warm wrappings were unfastened, that they might see his face; and when they saw his face beaming with joy and excitement, and saw what a young boy had come to save them, their enthusiasm was greater than ever. It was a welcome, indeed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ARCTIC HOUSEKEEPING.

WHEN the first moment of surprise was over, Captain Armstrong spoke again, and told them that a ship was waiting for them in Lancaster Sound, and a sledge-party from it was encamped within thirty miles of them, and that to-morrow morning they were to start to join it, and all travel together to the ship, in hope of a release from the ice in spring, and a happy return home. The fact that they were really rescued, which seemed at first wild and incredible to some of them, came home to every heart now. There were rapid questions and exclamations. The story of the pigeon's return and of Sir Hugh's generosity were told.

"And who do you think commanded our rescue-ship, the 'Constance?' and has brought the sledge-party forward to find us? Who but my nephew, John Armstrong, of the 'Investigator!'"

"God bless him!" "He's safe home, then." "We feared to ask you, Captain!" echoed through the hut.

"Wait a minute! John Armstrong brought our ship this season, but last season he came home with the news that his captain, M'Clure of the 'Investigator,' had discovered the north-west passage."

At this announcement three such cheers as might have been expected to knock the roof off the hut rose from the crew of the "Pole-Star."

As the sound died away a young man among them, who had decidedly the air of a gentleman in spite of a very ragged jacket, stepped forward, and taking Captain Armstrong by the hand said: "We must think of you now, who never think of yourself. Let me keep my command to-night, and you only think of rest. You are very tired."

"Agreed," said Captain Armstrong. "Edward, this is my first officer—my right hand, Philip Stewart: my right hand through all our struggles and sufferings."

They shook hands. Edward felt he had made a new friend.

"Now then," cried Philip, raising his voice, "no more questions; no more talk till we have taken care of our captain and his son. Who is cook to-night? Bring out the best we have. Spread bear-skins and make them rest, and bring water and seals' flesh for the dogs."

All were in motion directly, and while another young man, who said he had a right to take care of them because he was the doctor, took off their warm furs, the others had cleared the room of all the work they were about, throwing everything into little nooks and crypts at the sides. Then they trimmed the lamp, made of a hollow stone with seals' oil and a wick of moss, a fashion they had learned from the Esquimaux, and placed a large pot over it.

Captain Armstrong now directed them to unload the sledge, and the heap of fur clothing was soon piled in a corner.

"They were thoughtful for us, you see," said he, "and we shall go among our brothers less shaggy and wild-looking than we might have done. The rest of our cargo consists only of a few luxuries they sent to you."

The things were brought in, and especially the bread

and tea were very welcome presents; and a kettle for making it excited a laugh, and much admiration.

Edward, meanwhile, stretched at his ease, with Trident at his feet, his father opposite to him and gladness in his heart, had time to observe the construction of the hut and all the contrivances of its masters. It was built of rough stone and consisted of two chambers, united by a small opening, that could be closed or opened at pleasure. That he was in might be twelve feet each way, and rose to a dome-shaped roof, not above ten feet high in the middle. Round the wall was a kind of raised bench made of stones; the whole being after the plan of an Esquimaux hut, only larger and better built. It was on this raised bench that Edward and his father were lying. There was a large irregular-shaped stone in the middle, flat at the top, and reared on four fragments of rock that served as a table; and four great stones, one at each side of it, were seats.

In the middle of this table one of the men, who was steward to-night, placed some small stones, the purpose of which puzzled Edward. He then brought a great pile of empty crab-shells, half of which he stood at one end and half at the other. A number of knives and forks, made of bone or walrus tusks, were laid beside them. Then came drinking cups of various shapes and sizes, most of them being hollow shells. The large pot was now placed on the stones, steaming out a very savoury smell, and the supper was announced to be served.

Edward was invited to take his seat at the captain's table; his father and his first officer took each end; Mr. Wilson, the surgeon, sat opposite to Edward. All the rest of the company sat round the walls on the rough bench.

"Edward," said Philip Stewart, in his capacity of host for the night, "you see we cannot treat you with a soup-

tureen. We were too happy to find this good large tin pot that we had left with our depôt of provisions ashore. Will you have auk, gull, tern, kittiewake, ptarmigan, bunting, goose, or duck? All are contained in this stew."

Edward declared he was puzzled in the midst of such variety, but he thought that auk and kittiewake were tempting. Philip helped him to something which tasted very good to him, hungry and happy as he was; his plate was one of the crab-shells, and he was requested to be a little careful, as not standing quite flat, it might be apt to tip up: if he had a knife in his pocket he was asked to use it, as those contrived by the crew were too much of the character of the Chinese chop-stick. Every one was served soon, those who sat by the wall putting their crab-shells on their knees. There was abundance of water in large skins of tanned reindeer-skin, varnished with a preparation of reindeer horns; these had been bought from the Esquimaux. The lime-juice was a welcome addition to the whole company, and they supped chiefly on the bread, which they had not tasted since their shipwreck.

The next course was bear-steaks, cooked on a gridiron made of broken ramrods stuck in walrus tusks.

Supper being over, everything was cleared away with wonderful quickness, the kettle was set to boil, and tea made. Every one now became very merry, and enjoyed it to the utmost, while jokes and laughter filled the room with pleasant sounds.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MEETING AND A PARTING.

"He is awake, you need not creep about any longer."

These words, spoken by Philip, were the first Edward heard next morning, as he opened his eyes and started up, seeing every one was dressed, and that preparations for departure were going on rapidly.

"It is only five o'clock," continued Philip, "and the men have been anxious you should rest as long as possible; but come now, and I will show you your dressing-room. You will find plenty of water, but as to soap and towels——"

Edward stopped him to congratulate him on his fashionable appearance; to which Philip replied that he felt as warm and comfortable as he was fashionable—perhaps, indeed, rather more so—and that they were all quite proud of themselves, and expected to create a complete sensation among the bears and wolves, who were the only inhabitants of these hospitable shores at present. "Make haste, old fellow! for breakfast will be ready directly, and we long to be off," he added, as he hurried away.

Issuing from his dressing-room, Edward met his father.

"We are nearly ready, Edward," said he. "Your sledge is loaded with what provisions we require for our march. All we shall have to do after breakfast is to seal up our stores and hut, and leave them for the Esquimaux if any come this way. Come and see our larders and store-rooms."

Edward followed to some low snow-houses built against

the back of the hut, and looking in, saw great numbers of birds of various kinds, hares, foxes, portions of seal, bear, and walrus, joints of venison, piles of fish, and innumerable eggs. Heaps of dry leaves, which his father told him were sorrel, had a compartment to themselves. In another were skins full of oil, and great quantities of dry moss for fuel, and skins, furs, and feathers, for clothing, and for warmth while sleeping.

It appeared to Edward, as he looked, that there would have been ample stores for winter, and he said so.

"There is sufficient," said Captain Armstrong, "for thirty weeks—not quite long enough—but we did our utmost, and our ammunition was almost exhausted. Our chief danger would have arisen from the cold. Our supply of oil was too small. We should have been obliged to shut out every breath of air, in order to keep up the temperature, and our sufferings in the four months of darkness, and the extreme severity of the climate in early spring, must have been very great. We should have found ourselves at the end weakened by illness, and probably short of our numbers by many deaths. From all this we have been saved by your arrival."

Edward's head was bowed down by his gratitude for the blessing. When he spoke, it was to express his wonder at the amount of work accomplished during the three months that had passed.

"We were never idle for an hour," said his father. "By no other means could all the men have kept their health. In bad weather we attended to 'the interior of the hut,' as you artists would say, or performed the part of tailors; and having no books, we that had read told stories, histories, anything we could remember, and I had a singing-class. All the men that have voices can sing in parts.

With all this we have done capitally, and but for poor Tom's accident we should every one have left our summer-quarters perfectly well."

They were summoned to breakfast very soon, and a substantial one it was, the dogs faring as well as their masters. Then there was a general move. Some were clearing up, for everything must be left in perfect order; others were sealing up the storehouses with stones and snow. Edward, who had the materials about him, was writing, under his father's dictation, a short record, to be left behind, fastened up against the wall of the room. The record was as follows:—

"This hut was built by the crew of the 'Pole-Star,' Captain Armstrong, R.N., which was crushed in the ice with all her stores, thirty miles to the eastward of this spot, June 2nd, 1854. They were rescued by the arrival of the Captain's son, who brought them news that the 'Constance,' screw steamer, manned and fitted out by Sir Hugh Armstrong, and commanded by Lieutenant John Armstrong, R.N., was waiting to receive them in Croker's Bay—a note brought home by a carrier-pigeon to the Captain's wife having told her the story of their misfortune four days after it happened. The rescue ship arrived in Croker's Bay on the 2nd of September in the same year, and the news of it reached the crew of the 'Pole-Star' in this hut on the night of the 13th.

"This record is written before starting to join the ship, with grateful hearts for their preservation up to this time, and for the rescue that has been permitted to reach them.

"14th September, 1854."

By the time this had been signed by the Captain and all the crew, and fastened up, all was done. Edward had

already begged for a few relics, and packed them in the sledge. These were some of the knives and forks of walrus tusks, some flat shells used for plates, a drinking cup or two, a few skins of each bird, and of the fox and hare, to stuff, a bag of the soft eider down, and some of the moss.

Now every head was uncovered, and, standing round their captain, every voice joined his in a short but fervent prayer and thanksgiving. Then they followed him out in silence, closed up the entrance of the deserted hut, and turned their faces homewards.

It is not easy to imagine the joy in every heart, but there was something solemn in the silence with which they marched on. Suddenly Edward heard a chant rise upon the icy air, led by the fine strong voice of his father; with what joy did he join his own with it once more, after their long separation!

"Oh give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

"He telleth the number of the stars: He calleth them all by their names. Great is our God, and of great power. His understanding is infinite.

"He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth swiftly.

"He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice. Who can stand before his cold?

"He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

"The Lord healeth the broken-hearted, and bindeth up their griefs."

The voices died away, and the high spirits of the party soon broke out in talk, laughter, and songs. They walked mile after mile without thinking of fatigue, and halted at

noon, to rest and refresh the dogs more than because they felt any need of food or rest themselves—and yet it must be owned they did full justice to their good cheer. After two hours they started again, and when at last the sun set and the moon rose, some among them began to look out for the first view of the conical hill, and were obliged to own to themselves that a walk of thirty miles is rather fatiguing—especially when there is a good deal of rough and difficult ground to pass over: at all events, such a walk as makes a good supper and comfortable tent an agreeable prospect. The dogs walked wearily, and Edward kept his hand on Trident's head, and patted and encouraged him. It was necessary to halt once more, and give them half-an-hour's rest and some water.

The dogs stretched themselves out, and Edward was on his knees rubbing their tired feet with snow while they slept, when one after another raised his head, growling and snuffing the air, then all sprang to their feet barking furiously. At the same moment, a large she-bear with two cubs came stealthily out from behind a rock in front. Captain Armstrong levelled his rifle, so did two or three others.

"Stop!" said he; "let no one fire unless she comes on. The dogs will turn her."

She came on, however, boldly—probably pressed by hunger—but seeing the six fierce dogs, and the large party of men behind, she stopped, opening her mouth fiercely. The cubs got close up to her; one was completely hidden, the small head of the other was plainly seen in the moonlight peeping out of her thick hair.

"She would run and escape if she were not afraid for her cubs," said Captain Armstrong. "Call in your dogs, Edward!"

Trident obeyed instantly, the others unwillingly. Cap-

tain Armstrong fired his rifle in the air to frighten her away; but the bear would not move until the dogs retreated. When she was sure that they were really gone, she at last turned; but she did not forget her cubs. She first took one in her mouth, and flung it as far as she could from her, then the other the same; ran up to them, flung them both on again, growling and roaring furiously all the time, till she gained the rocks and disappeared.

"You might have hit her easily, Captain," said some one.

"Very easily. But why should I? We have been obliged to kill multitudes of animals for food. We can well afford to let this mother save her young ones, and leave them to their ice and snow. I should have felt like the 'Ancient Mariner' after he killed the albatross, if I had shot such a mother."

"All right, Captain," said several voices.

"I suppose, Edward," said Philip, "that if I were in England I should say your father was 'a brick.' Being near the Pole, I shall say he is the largest hearted man in the world. Look at him now, that can sympathise with a bear, and teach these fellows Coleridge's poetry, and then see him in front of danger and death. Edward, you might well risk your life for such a father!"

Edward felt that he and Philip would always be friends. "How I shall like to introduce John to you!" said he, "You will get on capitally together."

"We have several mutual friends," said Philip, "and I know him well by reputation already."

They harnessed the dogs again and moved on. The whole party walked now to ease the dogs, becoming more silent as they got more tired. At last Captain Armstrong pointed out the conical hill, which showed its top against the sky

about five miles off. They cheered at the sight, and a cheer answered.

The shout came from some dark objects which suddenly appeared on the snow, at a little distance, moving towards them. John had had his sledges unloaded, and brought all three, with ten dogs in each, and four of his men, to bring on the tired travellers. There was a joyous meeting.

"Where's your Captain? Which is he?" "Which is Lieutenant Armstrong?" This cry soon arose among the rescued crew.

"That's him, and no mistake," answered Peter, pushing several men out of the way.

The men pressed forward to receive his hearty shake of the hand. "Now, then! Don't lose a moment! Get in, and we are off!"

The party were divided among the sledges, not a foot more must any one walk. The four men unharnessed the Newfoundlanders, and left them to trot on at leisure, while they themselves dragged the "Little Maggie."

"Captain Armstrong and Master Edward must come in our sledge," said Adam Black.

"But give us a good load," said Peter, who was an established wit, and sure of a laugh. "We're four-horse power, and not afraid of it."

Philip must come in by Edward. Now they were all seated.

"Which is the doctor?" asked Peter.

"Here he is!" answered Wilson for himself.

"That's all right. You're wanted!"

"How is Tom?" asked Captain Armstrong, taking alarm.

"Very bad."

"Peter is apt to take the gloomy side, father," whispered Edward.

The three tents, with their lights raying into the darkness, looked cheerful and inviting as they came on. John, who had walked at the head of the cavalcade, ushered his guests into the two largest. His men unharnessed the dogs, which went and stretched themselves out in a snow-hut built expressly for them during leisure time, where their food and water were ready; Trident, of course, and Chloe, as a special privilege, keeping by Edward. Supper was spread, and there was a pleasant warmth and brightness from the lamps in each tent, and bear-skins laid for resting on. To the men from the hut, so long used to their wild life, the comfort seemed something wonderful. Ready hands were at work in a moment, helping off wraps, serving out food and drink (actually in cups and plates), and fatigue, hunger, and trouble seemed banished from the world.

But while every one else was in full enjoyment, Captain Armstrong, who had only swallowed a draught of water, was seated by his poor wounded man, and had grasped the rough hand that was held out to him in both his.

Tom Bolt lay in the third tent, on a bed of soft skins as comfortably arranged as possible. The tent had been coated without with snow, and was well warmed by the lamp, and perfectly quiet.

Tom's eyes were fixed on his captain with a look of love and confidence.

"Maybe I shall get better, Captain, now you're come," he whispered. He was too weak to say it louder. "They've all been as kind to me and as tender to me as if I'd been a young child, but I've been longing for a sight o' your face."

"I've been longing for a sight of yours, too, my dear

fellow," said Captain Armstrong, who saw too clearly that death was written there.

Tom smiled and looked up, and Captain Armstrong, following the direction of his eyes, saw Edward beside him.

"The sight of him does me good," said Tom. "It's hard to die *now*, Captain, when he's come to fetch us home."

Captain Armstrong could not speak. It seemed, indeed, very hard! The sick man had closed his eyes, as if the thought had been too much for him. Captain Armstrong could with difficulty suppress a groan, and the tears gathered in his eyes.

"I am going to send for Mr. Wilson. You will like to see him?"

"Yes sir. He's very kind. Are they all here? All right?"

"All here. They wanted to come to you, but we must keep you quiet."

He rose to call for Wilson. Tom's eyes followed him as he went, and rested on him as he returned with such a look of affection in them, that the tears gushed from Edward's. For the first time he now saw that death was coming.

Mr. Wilson made but a short examination, said a few kind words, and went to prepare a soothing drink. In the course of the evening several of his messmates came to see the sick man.

Edward and his father sat in that tent all night. It was getting towards morning; poor Tom had been lying very still for a long time, and they thought he slept, but when Captain Armstrong came close to the bed he saw that the eyes were open. Soon afterwards a few words broke the silence.

"You'll find out my poor old mother, Captain? You

know where she lives ; and you'll share the money, if they give me any, between her and Susan. And you'll tell Susan I always wore the lock of hair, and you'll bury it with me ?”

“I will do everything you wish, and tell them you have been a brave and faithful man, and God will comfort them. My poor Tom, remember who said, ‘ Well done, thou good and faithful servant ! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ So does our Lord say now to you.”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

Many a time had Tom said so to his captain in storm and tumult, in answer to orders given to stand and battle with winds and waves and ice ; and as his captain spoke that message in the quiet little tent, the same words, “ Ay, ay, sir,” answered him,—but gently now. They were Tom’s last words.

Silently and mournfully the men visited the tent next morning where their lost comrade lay. It was necessary to make preparations for burying him. It was very difficult, for the ground was hard as stone and they had no tools.

They sought about for some place, and discovered a hollow in a rock about a mile off, in which he might be laid, and then built up with stones. They returned, and placing their lost friend, wrapped in deer-skins, on one of the sledges, ten men dragged him to the place, while all the rest followed in procession, his captain walking at the head. Tenderly they laid him in his lonely sepulchre, and Captain Armstrong did not forget his request. Before they closed the opening he crept in, and laid by the silent dead a long lock of light silky hair. They built up against the opening a strong rampart of stones, which would never be disturbed. A grave is sacred to the Esquimaux. Peter

contrived to cut out in a stone the initials "T. B." and the year 1854. They could do no more, but turned slowly back to their encampment.

Captain Armstrong, seeing the necessity of raising their spirits, begged his nephew to hurry the departure for the ship. John, therefore, went among them as they were cooking their breakfast, and told them he would start in an hour after they had finished, and that it would depend on their energy how soon they got to the ship, and brought all their toils to an end. Six days, he said, was his limit, and if they seconded him, he thought it would be done.

The bustle of packing the sledges, striking the tents, and getting off, was the best possible thing for them. Once in motion again, the shock of poor Tom's death was recovered, and the natural light-heartedness of sailors returned to them. They accomplished the journey with all its difficulties within the time John had allowed. On the sixth day they got to the "Constance," having met the reserve-sledge the day before. They found everything right and all well on board; met with a most heartfelt welcome; and were soon settled in their comfortable quarters once more, in a good ship, and able to think of home.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WINTER IN LANCASTER SOUND.

It is the beginning of December. The sun set on the 30th of October, not to rise again for more than four months; but the full moon has been above the horizon for many

days and nights, and the stars shine brighter and look larger than they do in England. The "Constance" lies embedded in ice several feet thick, about a cable's length from shore. Her deck is housed over with thick felt, firmly fixed up with planking, and her lower spars act as beams. Her boats and all heavy stores, such as ropes, chain cables, anchors, are secured ashore, so as to leave her deck empty and free, as a place of exercise in bad weather. Her sides are piled up with snow to keep in the heat. At each end of the deck is a door, which, opening at the top of a flight of steps cut in the snow, leads down to the ice. The tall masts stand up clear against the starry sky. John would not have them unshipped; they serve as a guide to parties wandering off ashore and as a good station for looking out. The cold is not yet so intense as it will be in a month or two, but the thermometer stands at zero, and zero is 32° below the freezing-point.

On deck, sheltered by the felt and assisted by the funnels and stove-pipes from below, it is not much below the freezing-point. Between decks and throughout the sleeping-places a regular temperature of 50° is maintained, rising when everything is shut up for the evening to 60°. There it is warm and comfortable.

Various outbuildings of snow are constructed close to the ship. They are larders and store-rooms, where fresh provisions keep for any length of time. There is a stone building perched on a high rock ashore, that is the Observatory.

Trident and his party have their kennels on deck under the felt, but Trident's is usually empty. He is always with his master. The Esquimaux dogs are all gone but two; Olaf also is gone. Very soon after the return of the sledge party, on the 21st of September, Olaf asked his captain to be allowed to leave the ship. On inquiry it

was found, rather to John's surprise and amusement, that among that tribe of Esquimaux they met with, Olaf had seen the daughter of the chief, whom he had never forgotten since, and now wanted to go and ask her in marriage. Peter, who had found it out very soon, thought it was not a bad idea; and after thinking about it a day or two, and consulting Captain Armstrong and Edward, John sent for Olaf to settle the matter.

The poor fellow came, looking rather shy, ushered in by Peter.

"Well, Olaf," said John, "if you really mean to settle with this tribe, and know where to find them, you shall not go empty-handed. You have worked well for us, and shall have your reward."

Olaf, speaking in his broken English, said he was a dead man when they took him aboard, and he wanted no reward.

"But if you took a sledge and team of dogs you would have a better chance with the chief, I think. Peter says you know his daughter will consent. Go and choose the sledge you like best, and you shall have all the dogs but Nannook and Toodla. I am going to take them home."

Olaf stood bewildered at such a prize as this, and Peter, clapping him on the shoulder, told him his fortune was made, and went with him to get out his sledge and dogs. So Olaf was soon off, carrying with him also a present from Edward to his bride, and some tools and useful things besides for himself.

In fine weather, without much wind, the cold is not too severe in December to take exercise and amusement in the open air with pleasure. But it is necessary to dress warmly and take proper precautions. Three or four figures, looking as like bears as men can well do, are mounting to the deck, ready to go down upon the ice.

"It's colder to-day," said Allen, who was one of them; "say all you have to say before we sally forth, and don't indulge in much conversation afterwards. Your chin may freeze to your upper jaw. On your peril keep your tongue in your mouth. It would instantly stick to your lips, and make a pretty little wound by pulling off the skin."

"You talk of that little wound quite tenderly and *con amore*," said John, who was another of the bears.

"Oh, that's professional, you know," said Allen; "I should recommend (professionally also) that you avoid winking. Your eyelashes will be apt to freeze together."

"Anything else?" asked Captain Armstrong, also one of the party.

"Why, yes: unless your mittens are of the best quality, don't carry a rifle; you may be burnt; and if you feel something like a hot coal in your pocket, don't be alarmed, it's only your penknife. Keep on your masks. I'm glad to see the slits of the eyes are very small. They cannot be too small. Wilson and I have had several cases of snow-blindness to nip in the bud, and some frost-bites during this week. We are off to skate now. Won't you join us?"

"What do you say, John? I will, if you like, when we have had our walk," said Captain Armstrong.

John agreed, and they all sallied forth and went down the snow-steps; their breath made a cloud of smoke, as if each had fired a pistol, as he opened the door. They walked very fast, and kept their mouths tight shut for a time, for at first the air seemed to pierce them. But ten minutes' vigorous exercise made them feel it enjoyable. They passed quickly over the ice, which was all bathed in a flood of moonlight. It was ten o'clock, two hours after breakfast; but day and night were only words to them now.

They were bound for a spot at some distance, where

they had appointed to meet Edward. It was easy to find him by the noise of the dogs, who were always careering about on the ice near him. On the way they passed numerous pieces of sculpture, built up and cut out in snow by the men. There were bears, guns, pillars, bridges—all sorts of things. A gigantic snow-man was finished all but his head, and three or four sailors were in the act of rolling an immense snow-ball towards him, with the intention of hoisting it up into its place to perform the part of the head. When they had got it in its place they said they should give him a handsome nose, eyes, and mouth. John, venturing to speak for the first time, recommended hair and a beard, as very easy to contrive with loose snow and icicles.

"Have you seen Queen Victoria, sir? I finished her crown," asked one of the men. "She stands there in front of that 'ere castle, and we're going to have Britannia opposite very soon. The crown sparkles real pretty in the moon."

They found the Queen, whose diamond crown did, indeed, flash splendidly, and went on quickly. It was impossible to stand still to look at anything.

"Edward!" shouted Captain Armstrong; "here we are!"

"All right!" answered Peter, putting his head out of a cottage window.

"Coming, father!" cried Edward, appearing on the roof, where he was constructing the chimneys.

Captain Armstrong did stop now in spite of the cold, and his heart beat fast. It was a model of Fernhill. He and John had been under a promise not to go that way till they had permission.

"That snow-wreath beyond," said Edward, "we shall make into the wood. Isn't it like?"

"Very like, my boy. It is beautiful."

"Now, come to something else that we've done."

"I must stop a moment longer," said John, "to look at the dear old place. Well done, Peter!"

"Am I to go on with the wood, Master Edward?" asked Peter.

"No, no; wait till I can help. It must stop till to-morrow. I'm going now, so I suppose you have plenty to be about without me somewhere or other."

"Yes, yes; I have. All right!"

The three walked on; the eight dogs in their train. They went some distance; almost to the entrance of the bay.

"There is my cathedral!" said Edward, proudly.

The form that some hummocks had taken had suggested it; by building up snow-walls, below the pinnacles and towers into which the hummocks were splintered, and adding tracery and windows made of icicles, he had produced a really beautiful work. Peter, who had assisted with his usual cleverness, had wished to do several irregular things, such as making a dome in the middle, building a square door, and such things; but, as Edward was architect, his will was law, and he would have it as correct as he knew how to make it.

Having admired the cathedral to the full satisfaction of the designer, they went to the skating-grounds. Edward went several times down a long slide with ten men, who were shooting down it, one after another, before he put on his skates; but then he joined his father and John, and found Philip, Allen, and Wilson there also. As they returned to the ship, after an hour of this capital exercise, quite warm, and in high spirits, they passed a place where another party of the sailors had contrived a game like what

the Parisians call "*Montagnes Russes*," by sliding down a steep ravine of snow on a rough sledge they had made.

These were the amusements in fine weather. In bad weather the deck was used for exercise, games, and sometimes dancing.

The work of the ship went on regularly all the time, and the order observed was as strict and perfect as it is in a man-of-war. Every afternoon, also, the cabin, which had been a social dining-room an hour before, was converted into a school. Classes were formed, and taught by Captain Armstrong, John, and the two surgeons. Edward had a drawing-class. Sometimes they had lectures; sometimes evening readings; sometimes concerts, in which glees and choruses were performed with much applause. In this way the long darkness, and the many periods of storm, fog, and snow-drift passed on with wonderful quickness.

Much of Captain Armstrong's time was spent in the observatory, where Edward acted as his assistant. Edward had resumed his studies under his father, and was very happy. As the cold increased in intensity, and the thermometer fell to 20° below zero, which it did before Christmas, he was not allowed to go out, except for a short, quick walk, and only when it was calm. If there was any wind, he experienced a sensation of breathlessness and torpor, and appeared stupefied, like a man half-intoxicated, and his father, seeing this once, would not allow him to be exposed to it again. All but the strongest among the men sometimes felt the same.

Christmas-day was kept with all possible rejoicing. An extract from Edward's journal will give the best idea of it:—

"25th of December.—I awoke at six, and remembered it was Christmas-day, and thought of my mother and all at

home. I couldn't lie thinking long, for I was obliged to be ready by the half hour to deck the cabin. 'It is black as pitch outside,' Peter says, when he comes to wish me Merry Christmas. All the more need to be bright inside. We lighted twelve lamps—John helping us—and hung up our flags round the walls, instead of holly. They looked very well. We all mustered before my father came in, and greeted him with a Christmas carol.

"We had service at eleven; I thought of you very often; and afterwards my father made a kind of address to us. He said many beautiful things to us. You know how he would feel and speak; and I am sure he had made us very happy, for we were in wild spirits when we rushed upon deck to make ourselves warm before dinner.

"We had a splendid dinner, and were astonished by the appearance of large joints of good Scotch roast beef, preserved in ice, and six great plum-puddings. With our hot coffee afterwards we drank toasts, and got very merry. 'Our friends at home, and may our next Christmas-day be spent with them,' was the last.

"Allen read Dickens's 'Christmas Carol' to us after dinner. He is a capital reader, and the men enjoyed it very much. We had a concert at night. Many a time throughout the day we three—I mean my father, John, and I—got together to talk about you. There is but one cloud upon John and me. It is to see that my father often suffers great anxiety at the thought of your dreadful trial, my dear mother. Even now, seven long months, at the very least, must pass before we can get home to you."

Edward knew but a small part of the suffering he has mentioned here. There were times when it seemed to Captain Armstrong that he should only go home to find he had lost her; that she could not endure so long a period

of anxiety. At these times he shut himself up alone, and struggled with his grief till he had mastered it.

Edward's journal was faithfully kept all this winter, and illustrated throughout. Every description had its sketch. The following, written on New Year'-day, was accompanied by one or two very spirited ones:—

"1st *January*, 1855. Think of that date! We brought in the new year that is to take us home, all standing in one great circle, with three cheers. We have been very jolly all day. We are to have a ball at night on deck, and shall light up by and by. We are all making up our journals, for the sake of writing '1855' for the first time. We have only just settled, after getting into a scrape on the ice. We have no moon, and it is cloudy, so it is just as dark as the fog made it on Christmas-day; but after dinner, Peter, who always has his eyes wider open by half than any one else, proclaimed that the 'roarer was blazin' away.' So out we sallied, after muffling up; I promising my father only to stop out a quarter of an hour. It was a splendid sight! Arches, circles, palm-branches, crosses, were flashing over the sky. Macleod warned us not to go far off, knowing how suddenly the aurora fades. It was well he did. Out it went in a moment, and we, about twenty of us, were left in inky darkness. They began to put up blue-lights and rockets from the ship instantly, and we got safe in; but we knocked each other down without the least idea we were near, as we came groping back, and Ben and another great strong fellow ran foul of the snow-man, and down he went; his head came bounding over the ice, and sent half a dozen flat on their faces, but our bearskins are too thick for us to care about tumbles. Here we are very snug. The ball to-morrow.

"2nd. The ball was great fun. We chose out all the

tallest and roughest fellows on board to be ladies, and you should have seen Allen's airs and graces. He is more than six feet high, and with two flags arranged as drapery he looked wonderful. Our music was a fiddle and tambourine, played by Macleod and Peter. The tambourine Peter and I made out of a wooden hoop, with parchment stretched over it, and the bells off the 'Little Maggie.' Our ball-room was the deck, and in spite of the housing, which is now coated with snow besides, and the lamps, and all of us, it was not up to freezing-point; you may suppose, therefore, it would have been cold enough for our musicians if we had not made them an orchestra. It was something like a 'Jack-in-the-green,' only large enough for two, and made of bear-skins instead of green boughs. They had a lamp inside, and an opening opposite to each for breath. There we could see Macleod's brown face as he played with all his might, continually bursting with laughter at our performances, and Peter's as grave and important as usual, while he flourished and banged, and made artistic strokes with his thumb on his instrument, and criticised everything we did, you may be sure.

"Suddenly, just as we were recovering our breath after the 'Haymakers,' came a sound of music of a different order. A few of those powerful, stirring chords we all know so well, made a prelude to 'Rule Britannia.' My father had taken the fiddle in hand. We all sung it in chorus, then 'God save the Queen,' and our New Year's-day was ended.

"I am going to work hard now all the rest of my time. When spring comes I have numbers of sketches to make, and we have quantities to do in the observatory. I mean to be something like an astronomer when I come home.

"I must tell some of the extraordinary sights we have

seen. One night the moon seemed to stand on a column of light that rested on a hill ashore. Another she looked all notched round the edges, and often cut half off. We have had two or three splendid exhibitions of parhelia, or mock-moons, as the sailors say. Four smaller moons set in a circle of light round her.

"Strange things happen, too, of all kinds. When we first go into the observatory with our lamp, there is a fall of snow inside. Our metal instruments, when we take them out bright enough, are covered with hoar-frost in a minute. There are sounds of strange moans and groans about the ship that make one think of Peter's ghost stories. Then the food! He might make his sawdust puddings now, if he was on short allowance. But he isn't, for we have plenty of everything. All the meat has to be sawn up; butter and lard require a chisel and mallet; the brown sugar is cut in large slices. The lamp-oil no longer requires a barrel; it stands alone, looking like a sandstone roller for a gravel walk. I could go on telling such things for an hour."

The cold increased, and the thermometer fell to 30° below zero before the end of January. The long darkness began to tell on them all, and they said very often to one another, "How white you look!" February was ushered in by a violent storm. The ice in their harbour continued immovable, but they could see, by the crimson light that now began to glow in the south about noon, a terrible commotion beyond the headland. The force of the storm had broken the ice in some places, and enormous blocks of it seemed to heave up against the sky in black hills, then sink again, and the whole scene melt into night, while the wind raged, and a sound like one continuous peal of thunder reverberated round the ship.

How often did Edward look round at the contented faces in the comfortable cabin as he sat by his father, and think what they must have suffered in this dreadful season in their hut! How grateful was his heart that they were saved!

CHAPTER XXIX.

SPRING IN LANCASTER SOUND.

“FEB. 8th, 1855.—You must try to fancy us all out on the ice, every man of us except John, who is at the mast-head; and Peter, who stands near the ship’s bell. It is clear weather, but there are some heavy clouds. They are deep black and bright crimson. The sky behind them in the south is gold. It flashes—it grows dazzling. Eight bells tell us it is twelve o’clock.

“‘Sun in sight!’ shouts John, and next minute the yards are manned, and we give a loud cheer as the first rays dart through the air. Slowly he rises! We do not know at home what a blessing the sun is, Maggie, dear!”

The sun that rose that day soon set again; but every day he rose earlier and set later, till day and night became equal, then day lengthened and lengthened, and became perpetual. But during February and March the cold did not abate, it even increased. The air pierced like a sword. You could see that it was filled with small particles of ice that dazzled the eyes with their brilliance, and rayed out all the colours of the rainbow when the sun shone. At every rise of temperature came storm, snow, and fog.

Towards the middle of March there was a change for the better. The days lengthened. Football on the ice be-

came a popular game. Skating began again. The pieces of sculpture near the ship, Fernhill, the cathedral, had all vanished long since, carried away by the storms, but no more were built up. Hopes of a break-up, and getting out of harbour, had begun to take too much possession of every mind for that.

One fine day, about this time, the man on watch reported "Esquimaux ashore." Presently Olaf was seen in front, driving his team of dogs, and by his side a lady. Behind came more sledges, with men, women, and children. A deputation from the ship went to meet the bride and bridegroom, and bring them on board, and with them, by Olaf's request, the chief and one or two more.

Olaf was evidently very proud of his wife, and with reason. She was really pretty for an Esquimaux girl, and behaved with great decorum. He must have given her many instructions before bringing her, for she kept by his side always, and looked at him as if for direction on every occasion. They were feasted handsomely, drank gallons of water, and at last were allowed to invite the rest of their party on board, because Edward wanted to take portraits of the bride and the chief. Olaf he had before. He succeeded very well with his lady-sitter, but nothing could keep the chief still, till John, recollecting Parry's contrivance on a similar occasion, sat down opposite and placed himself in a dignified attitude, looking very grave. Immediately the chief mimicked him, and sat without moving as long as he did, to the great diversion of the sailors who were by.

Meanwhile Macleod, who was on deck in charge of the party that had been invited on board, had begun bitterly to repent this act of hospitality. After eating and drinking to an extraordinary amount, they had begun roaming

about noisily, pushing into every corner, touching everything, and a few of them stealing what little things they could lay hands on. No detective officer, however, could have watched them more narrowly than Peter, who recovered everything they took. They were not the least ashamed of being found out, and only went into fits of laughter.

Peter brought Olaf up, and asked him why he did not teach them better. Olaf was quite in grief about it, and said such severe things to the thieves that they hung their heads and looked very disconsolate, and one woman stood wiping her eyes on a bird-skin. Olaf was evidently a great man among them, and he told Peter he was trying to teach them what the missionaries had taught him. So far, however, apparently, without much success. Edward came up with his father while all this was going on, and they both encouraged Olaf to persevere, and saw so much about him that pleased them that a sudden idea for his good occurred to Captain Armstrong. Calling up Philip Stewart, Wilson, and all of his men that he could collect, he told them of it, and meeting with hearty approbation, summoned Olaf before him, gave him exact directions how to find the hut, and entire possession of it and all its stores. Olaf's gratitude was unbounded, and his wife, when made to understand, was in a rapture of joy. In order to spread cheerfulness among the rest of the party, John and Edward ransacked their stores and gave a present to every one, but as they had very few left, these presents were often only some iron hoop, staves of old barrels, and such things. They were, however, received with unbounded joy, laughter and jumping, as usual.

"What shall I give to the children?" said Edward to Peter. "I have not a single toy remaining."

"Give 'em a lump of yellow soap a-piece," said Peter. "It's sugar-plums to *them*."

The steward was set to work to cut up some bars of soap, and Edward distributed them, giving the greatest delight. Their guests took their leave with expressions of gratitude, and told Olaf to say they would never forget the white men.

Poor Olaf shed many tears when he bid good-bye. He said he knew the ship would be gone before he came that way again. They promised him to tell his people at Upernavik, if they touched there, that he was "alive, and happy and rich." These were his words, and so he drove away with his little wife.

Before the end of the month the housing was taken down and the decks left open to the air. The boats, sails, and stores were shipped; the men worked in lighter clothing; and frequent observations were taken from the mast-head seaward.

There was a sudden rise of temperature on the 2nd of April. The thermometer was one degree above the freezing-point. It was too warm to skate, so Edward started with his father, John, Allen, and Philip, for a walk ashore. Everything was wet; they sank in the soft snow, and long icicles that fringed the rocks were dripping on their heads. They felt exhausted with the heat.

While they rested John had his glass at his eye.

"Brown clouds on the horizon! Open water there!" he cried.

Every one looked, and agreed that it was so.

"What is that dark mass on the ice?" asked Edward.

"It seems to move."

"Another good sign for us," replied his father. "Rein-

deer migrating northward. Their instinct teaches them there is no time to lose."

The party watched till a large herd of deer were distinctly seen passing steadily on, turning to neither right nor left till they gained the shore and still held on. Only a few stragglers were left behind. Captain Armstrong had left off watching them, and was looking seawards again. He called to the others to observe the frost-smoke in three different places, a sure sign of leads in the ice. The appearance is simply a cloud of vapour rising from the water, and looks like the smoke from a bonfire.

They walked on for some miles, passed a second headland, and descended again towards the shore. Edward had lingered behind in a cave under the cliffs, in front of which icicles of enormous length formed a great fringed curtain or canopy, now studded at every point with water-drops, which glittered in the sun, and fell with a plashing sound at his feet. He made a sketch of it, then tore it up as a lamentable failure, and ran out to join his companions. Before he reached them, however, he stopped again. Six or eight conical elevations in the ice, a little way from the shore, puzzled him. Strange sounds issued from them, and as he looked the cones seemed to grow, and began to steam.

"Allen!" he cried, "do come here."

Allen ran back to him; at the same time Peter, who was out with a shooting-party, came up. Neither had ever seen anything of the kind before. Allen said they looked like the mud volcanoes of Mexico. Peter said the sound was exactly like a whale whistling.

"A whale whistling!" said Edward. "How can you believe in such nonsense, Peter?"

"Haven't I heard it myself, many a time?" said Peter.

Suddenly two of the cones began to spout up water with the vapour, then another the same, then another. They crumbled, broke up, and fell in ruins, and a group of narwhales were seen floundering among the fragments, dashing the water about and rejoicing in their release. Their spouting under water had made the sound that sailors call whistling and barking. Peter walked off with his rifle as soon as the mystery was explained, looking even more grave and self-satisfied than usual. The gambols of the narwhales were most amusing, and Edward wished John could but see them, and have a good laugh over them; but he and Captain Armstrong and Philip were too far off to hear him. They had stopped now, however, and were waiting near three Esquimaux huts, examining them on every side. It was strange that Esquimaux should have been so near and they never know it! So they thought at first. But there were no signs of the life of those people near. No dirt, or offensive sights and odours. These huts were deserted.

Edward said he would go and sketch an interior—a good opportunity; so he crawled in at the opening passage after clearing away the snow that blocked it up, and emerged into the chamber at the end of it; Trident followed him, but after a minute returned to the entrance and howled dismally, then ran in again.

Taking alarm, Captain Armstrong went in and saw a dreadful sight. The hut was not empty; it was inhabited, not by the living, but the dead. By the dim light that entered at the passage, and a small hole in the roof, he saw eight dead bodies. They were clothed in their usual dress—the father, mother, and four children, and a very old man and woman, probably the grandparents. The youngest child was in its mother's hood. Some were lying, some

sitting on the floor, in the attitude of life. Their dog lay stiff beside them. Edward was leaning against the wall, his face nearly as pale as the faces of the dead. It was a very little place, not above eight feet each way; and the ghastly sight, and heavy, sickening air, had nearly made him faint.

His father lost not a moment in dragging him out, and he soon recovered his breath and his senses, but not his good spirits.

"What," he asked, "could have killed them?"

The horror was increased when, on examining the other huts, John and Philip found that there were four dead bodies in one and nine in the other.

Captain Armstrong's opinion was that cold must have been the cause of this horrible calamity, for the people were not emaciated; and, besides, he had observed a large piece of walrus-flesh in a corner of the hut he entered. The people had probably died in winter, and been preserved by the cold from decay.

Having closed the entrances with stones and snow, the party left these dismal tombs, with a feeling of relief when they were out of sight. But Edward could not recover himself: he was oppressed with thoughts of the misery these poor people had suffered, and with a sort of shuddering imagination of how narrowly his father and all his crew had escaped the danger of a like fate. He was lagging behind, when John hailed him and beckoned him on. Some change of weather seemed at hand. The wind rose, and with it large flakes of snow came wet and cold against their faces; it was like English snow, as Edward said, and it chased away his gloom; for it told of milder weather, and brought hopes of home again. No such snow had fallen all winter; it had always been small, hard, and

icy. They were soon nearly blinded, and a little uncertain of the way. It was only by keeping steadily in a line behind John that they held together, and even then they got into many hollows and pools; so that at last they were very glad to hear voices hailing them, and to find they were near the ship. They were met with news that the sportsmen had brought in two rein-deer, and had found traces of musk oxen.

Something fluttered and fell at Edward's feet, as he passed along the snowy deck; it was a dovekey. He picked it up, and the sight was hailed by every one. "The birds are coming back!" was called from one to another. This solitary one was much exhausted. Edward took it to his cabin, and tried to make it eat and drink, but he could not. He then laid it in one of the boats, and put some pieces of fish by it. Next morning it was gone, and it had eaten some of the food. Edward enjoyed walking on the once more open deck. The fresh snow that had fallen had covered all that had been trodden by passing feet and all inequalities near the ship with one sheet of pure white.

"Are ye listening to the snow-birds, Mr. Edward?" said Macleod.

No; Edward was admiring the fretted silver on the rigging: but now he heard a sweet sound of chirping, and, looking higher, saw the pretty snow-buntings that had arrived in the night fluttering about and resting on the spars and ladders. The little things were very tame, and came down for the food he strewed for them; and it was seldom, after this morning, that some of these fluttering visitors were not to be seen.

But a succession of storms followed the rise of temperature, and lasted to the end of the month, breaking up the ice to seaward, where tremendous conflicts went on. When

it was possible to climb to the topmast, or to stand on the cliffs, it was a grand sight to see the war that raged there. Blocks of ice forty or fifty feet in height would rise up, dash against the fixed ice near the shore, and, recoiling, break into a thousand fragments, lashing the waves into fury. No wonder that a little ship, the work of men's hands, is now and then overwhelmed in such conflicts ! But no doubts or fears came over the watchers of these sights—nothing but the hope of speedy deliverance. The ice was breaking up sooner than usual : it was the end of April now. It was rational to believe that before May was over they might get out of harbour. All the signs of an Arctic spring were about them : the sun never set ; whales had been seen, seals were plentiful, ptarmigan had been shot in numbers ; and whenever they looked up, through the day or the night, the air was chequered with moving columns ; all the varieties of Arctic birds were in progress towards that mysterious northern ocean that Captain Armstrong believed in, and had so longed to reach ; the geese and eider-ducks, and every variety of gulls, could be distinguished in myriads, and now and then a flock of wild swans.

By the middle of May the ship was in sailing order, the boilers filled, and a constant watch kept up for openings in the ice. By the 27th it had become so thin, even in the harbour, where the stillness prevents its breaking up, that John ordered up the ice-saws and all the gear for cutting out, to be ready at a moment's notice. After Peter and his mate had brought them up, Peter asked leave to go for a tramp ashore, with a small party, to shoot deer or any game they could find. It might be the last chance before getting out, he said. Permission was granted, and the party set out about three in the afternoon. They had

not returned at the evening muster, at half-past nine. It seemed strange, but no one was uneasy except Edward; he wondered very much that Peter, whose strong sense of duty he knew so well, and who was, besides, very proud of his punctuality, should not have come in, considering the work that might have to be done, nobody could tell how soon, in cutting out of harbour. When ten o'clock came, and every one was turning in for the night, and still no tidings of the party came, his father and John began to feel alarmed, and four of the men were ordered out to look for them, Mr. Wilson volunteering to take the command. It was known that the deer were to be found to the westward, so there was no doubt which way to go.

About two in the morning Edward awoke, and got up to ask the watch on deck if the party had come in. He met his father on the companion-ladder. The party had not come in, nor had Mr. Wilson's returned.

"They must be lost on the ice somehow," said Edward. "Has it opened between them and us, so that they cannot get back?"

"That is exactly my idea," said his father. "I have ordered up the gutta-percha boat, and am going off directly, with four more men to look after them."

"Without me?"

"No, my boy; I was on my way to call you."

"Thank you, father! Cannot we take the sledge and dogs?"

"The snow is impracticable for a sledge. We must walk."

They walked fast, with a high west wind in their faces, more and more alarmed by the aspect of the ice, which had parted from the shore all along the coast. After two weary hours, they saw some men rapidly approaching.

Edward, who was a very swift runner, started forward to meet them.

"A boat! Run back and order a boat!" they shouted.

"We have got one!" shouted Edward in return.

The men waited for the advancing party, and proved to be three of those who went with Mr. Wilson. Their report was full of fear: it had been a long time before they could find Peter Greely and the men with him; at last they discovered them far out on the ice, wandering along the edge of the water; and between them and the shore was a dark, wide channel; worse than all, it was evidently widening, and the whole body of sea-ice drifting to seaward.

There was nothing for it but to press on. They walked mile after mile. To Edward's impatient spirit it seemed that many hours passed. They often lost sight of the sea by taking short cuts behind the rocks: then it seemed worse than ever. At last, as they came out behind a low hill that had hid it for some time, they saw Mr. Wilson and another man walking towards them, and a party of four, far out across the dark water.

The boat was in the water in a minute. Captain Armstrong got in. Edward would fain have gone, but his father called one of the sailors to go instead, reminding Edward that his arms were not so strong as the sailor's, and that the boat had to return, and would not carry more than six.

Those left on the beach watched the boat as it neared the ice; then they plainly saw one of the men taken on board. Afterwards there was confusion and delay, and it was evident that one, if not all the rest, had been dashed into the water. There were five minutes of intense anxiety; then the boat put off, and began to move towards them. They breathed again.

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But silently and sadly the boat approached the shore, and as it came nearer Edward tried in vain to count the proper number in it. One was wanting.

"Where is Peter?" he cried, wildly.

Poor Peter lay motionless and pale in the bottom of the boat. They could not tell what had happened to him. The ice had broken as they took the second man aboard, and all had gone into the water, but the others clambered in. Peter Greely must have struck his head on a tongue of ice under water, for he would have sunk if they had not pulled him out by the hair of his head.

Edward knelt by the side of his old friend, loosened his cap, and pressed his hands; but Peter continued insensible. Mr. Wilson examined him, and found a contusion and slight wound on the temple. It was necessary to carry him back to the ship.

"Lay him in the boat," said Captain Armstrong. "We six are fresh, and able to carry it. Quick, my lads! Help him in, and lay him carefully. We have no time to lose."

They went steadily on, Mr. Wilson's party insisting on relieving Captain Armstrong's sometimes; tired as they were, they would not suffer him and his men to bear the burden all the way: but his seamen refused to give up. At last the weary way was passed. It was nearly twelve o'clock. The last party had been out eight hours, the others twenty-six, and poor Peter's forty-two.

What a contrast did the harbour present to their silent burden! The anchors were heaved up, the "Constance" had moved out of the bed in which she had lain for nine months, her steam was up, and slowly and with careful steering she moved along a lane of water sawn in the ice. The sawing was going on continually a little ahead of her. The pieces of ice, as they were cut out, were broken up

and sunk, or floated off past her. John was on deck, in the midst of the busy hands, directing everything in concert with Macleod. Philip emerged from the group, and sent a boat along the lead to bring the returned party on board, waiting to receive them at the gangway.

"I congratulate you, my captain!—my dear Edward! The ice is opening fast outside. We are afloat. But what is it?—something is the matter!"

John hurried up at this moment, with a face full of excitement, to welcome his uncle and express his joy at the sight of the men who had been missing; but, like Philip, he stood aghast at the sight of poor Greely lying on deck, still quite unconscious. John talked aside with Wilson for a few minutes.

"You are all exhausted with fatigue and this disaster," said he. "Allen will take the charge of our poor Greely from Wilson; and you, Black and Trail, see that Captain Armstrong and all the returned party are properly refreshed. Get a good breakfast up instantly; then they must all turn in. You will try to sleep," he said, turning to his uncle; "and you, also, Edward. We are going on as well as possible, and shall keep on steady at our cutting-out till six o'clock. To-morrow morning, if all goes well, we shall be out of the bay."

"Let Greely be carried down to my berth," said Edward to Allen.

"Where shall you be? You are tired out."

"On the floor by him. He must not be left alone, and he must be quiet. You will stay by him till I have had something to eat?"

All was done according to these arrangements; and then, after ascertaining that nothing more could be done for Peter yet, and trying in vain to rouse him, Edward lay down

by him on a bear-skin that filled the whole floor of his cabin, and slept at last.

But he started up, after many hours, with the new feeling of violent pitching and rolling, the sound of the engine at work, the dash of the waves, the crunching of the ice, the rapid orders on deck, and the answering, "Ay, ay!" and song of the seamen.

"The captain wants you," said Peter's feeble voice; "he's been lookin' for you. Go up to him."

"You're better, Peter. You know me now; you can speak to me now."

Peter closed his eyes, and two large tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks—the first tears Edward had ever seen on them, much as they had done and suffered together. He seized and grasped the hand that lay motionless outside the hammock, and fast and hot his own tears fell on it.

"God bless you, Master Edward—you and your father! My blessing goes with you home. You'll take care of the old woman?"

"You must go home, too. No, no, Peter—I cannot bear it! God will not let you die!"

"Go up now; I want for nothing. They're all very kind to me. But you'll come back presently; you're like a son to me. I'm going to sleep now."

Philip appeared at that moment, and said he would remain in Edward's place, if he would go up to his father.

His father, in a rough coat, dripping with the salt water that was dashed over the deck every minute, hurried to meet him as his head rose to the deck, and made him hold fast by his arm. Edward looked up and around. Clouds were scudding over the sky before the wind; sea-birds flapped their wings and shrieked on the frowning cliffs of the headland they were passing; the masts stood up tall

and bare, and a cloud of smoke issued from the funnel. The break-up had come. They were steering through zigzag leads of open water. Astern was a track of sea, some fifty yards across; ahead, a wandering lane, little wider than the bows, encumbered with floating fragments of ice that were heaved and dashed against her by the waves. The "Constance" was fairly on her homeward voyage.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

It was the 28th of July, 1855, and a breezy morning, when, at about seven o'clock, Margaret and her Aunt Mary were seated on the rocks by the shore near Aberdeen, gazing over the sunny sea. Both of them looked sad. It seemed strange to see on that young face a look of care and thought, but Maggie's had that expression, and she had grown taller by more than a year since she bid Edward good-bye. They sat silent for some time, then she said—

"Three days only to August now."

"Yes, but you must not expect them in August. It is too much to hope. September is the earliest we ought to think of."

"Sometimes I get so sad about mamma, Aunt Mary. Are you ever anxious about her?"

Miss Armstrong did not know how to answer. She only looked pityingly into Margaret's face.

"Then you are frightened, too! I do not believe she ever sleeps at all. She was awake when I came out this morning, and if I ever awake in the night, her eyes are always open. Then, how thin she has become! And she hardly eats anything. She tries to eat and cannot, and tries that we should not observe it."

"My dear child, it is natural that she should be anxious. Her trial is very severe, and her calmness is wonderful."

"I think she would be better if she complained, but she never does. Oh, if they would but come home! I know John will not lose a moment. He knows the need there is for haste; but with all his will to bring them quickly, he may not be able."

Margaret was silent for some time; then she leaned her head on her aunt's shoulder and said, "If they do not come before winter, I don't know what will happen;" and her tears flowed fast.

Miss Armstrong was very kind and gentle to her, and soon persuaded her to move homewards. They had a walk of nearly a mile to go before they reached Sir Hugh's house. The garden was bright with flowers. Margaret lingered behind to pick a beautiful bouquet for her mamma and took it to the breakfast-room. There she found her mamma, who kissed her as she gave the flowers. Everything looked bright in the room; everything outward was cheerful: a sad contrast to the hearts that never forgot their great sorrow. How many months—long, weary months—had passed away since little Launcy brought his message home, and each one, as it dragged on, had seemed to make the sorrow the more difficult to bear!

Sir Hugh came in. Even he looked melancholy, and was much more silent than he used to be.

"I have been reading an article on the dreadful news that reached us last autumn of Sir John Franklin," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"Not a good subject for you, my dear Constance."

"It makes no difference to me, Sir Hugh. I cannot hear or read anything so dreadful of shipwrecks, deaths, or starvation, that something more dreadful still has not been in my

thoughts day and night for long. Lady Franklin has watched and suffered for ten years ; at length comes certainty : which is the most difficult to bear, the doubt or the certainty ?”

It was seldom she said anything that so betrayed her feeling, and she coloured after it as if she reproached herself. Sir Hugh tried to make her see that doubt even yet hung over the fate of Franklin.

“ A party of Esquimaux were met on the western shores of Boothia by Dr. Rae, and these Esquimaux told him that a party of white men, amounting to about forty, had died of hunger near the great Fish River, on the shores of North America.

“ Ah ! we should not believe such a report from such evidence, only that they had in their possession so many articles evidently belonging to Franklin and his officers and crew. Silver forks and spoons, with their crests and mottoes, and numbers of other things, some broken up, but all, undoubtedly, out of the two missing ships.”

“ That is quite true. We know to a certainty that Franklin did not sail northward from Beechey Island, but southward. He must have passed down Peel Sound, and have too much reason to believe that a party from his ships has perished ; but whether the ‘ *Erabus* ’ and ‘ *Terror* ’ were wrecked, or still remain in the ice ; whether he himself and all his crew have perished—you know they amounted to one hundred and forty—no one yet knows, for no one has visited the spot.”

“ Ten years have passed. Oh ! I cannot but believe all have perished.”

“ It is too likely, too likely,” said Sir Hugh, in a tone of deep feeling.

“ Mamma,” said Margaret, who wished to prevent her from thinking of this most mournful news, “ will not papa and John be happy to hear that Captain Kellett and Cap-

tain M'Clure, and the crew of the 'Investigator,' came safe home?"

"Yes, indeed, dear, they will."

"Do you know, Maggie," said Aunt Mary, "that Mrs. Greely is here? She arrived last night."

"How kind and thoughtful you are, Sir Hugh, to propose her coming!" said Mrs. Armstrong, trying to recover herself. "You think of everything for us all."

"I shall so like to see her, and ask her about Launcy and everything. I shall find her after breakfast, and have such a talk!" cried Maggie.

"She tells me Fernhill looks very bright and beautiful, and that her son Robert takes a pride in having the garden full of flowers. She says also that a cottage in the village that her husband always longed to have, is empty now, and she hopes he will take it when he comes home."

Mrs. Armstrong rose, and went to the window, where there was a fine sea view, and where a telescope stood. She sat looking through it, as she often did, and continued looking for some time.

"Is there anything particular to see, mamma?" asked Margaret.

Mrs. Armstrong did not answer at first. Then she said only, "Is this Tuesday?"

"No, mamma; Wednesday."

"Not the day for the Inverness steamer?"

"No, it came in yesterday."

"How nervous Constance is to-day!" said Miss Armstrong to Sir Hugh. "See how her hand shakes!"

A loud ring was heard at the gate at this moment. Immediately afterwards Mark threw open the door of the room, and said—

"Sir Hugh, they have come from the pier to say that the 'Constance' is in sight, to the northward."

Margaret rushed to her mother, who had nearly fallen on the floor. But she quickly became calm, and was seated in the carriage as soon as it could be got ready. They all four went together. They drove to the pier, but left the carriage, and went up on the height above directly, Mrs. Armstrong walking with more strength than she had possessed for months.

The ship was now visible by the naked eye; a speck in the distance. The news had spread, and a number of people had collected; but everyone respected the group on the height. No one went near them, except one old sailor, whom Sir Hugh had asked to keep by them, because his greater experience enabled him to see quicker, and report more accurately as the ship came on.

"She's comin' on ten knots an hour at the very least. She'll be in by twelve o'clock."

Mrs. Armstrong whispered something to Margaret.

"Can you see any flags flying?" asked she of the sailor.

"I canna say. She's got her steam up, and a gude crood o' sail besides. She's a lucky ship, and has made gude speed. It's no that common a thing for a ship to come in frae the ice before July's set. She'll ha' fund the 'Pole-Star's' crew last autumn, I'm thinkin'."

"Surely I see something red fluttering?" said Margaret, for whom the sailor held the telescope.

"Oh, ay! She's a' decked out i' colours, red, blue, and white, a' up the ropes!"

Words of rapture and gratitude went up to heaven from the trembling figure beside Margaret, but no one heard them but the young girl who had clung close to her mother.

"Thank God! thank God!" said Sir Hugh; "they are

all safe! I trust, I believe it! He leaned hard on Miss Armstrong's arm in his agitation.

"There's a large crew aboard," said the sailor.

"As many as sixty?" asked Sir Hugh.

"I canna say; but it looks like it. She's comin' on weel; and weel she must ha' come on. He's a clever lad, that Lieutenant Armstrong!"

Nearer and nearer came the ship. She stopped for an instant. A pilot-boat that had been on the outlook shot alongside, and the pilot was taken on board. All could plainly see the moving figures of men on board now. There were sixty, at the very least figure—so said the sailor.

After a time, three on the quarter-deck seemed to stand out from the rest. Those three were looking through glasses towards the shore. One of them raised his hand with something white in it.

"My husband! my husband! I know the movement of his arm!" said Mrs. Armstrong, in a whisper. She had no voice; she trembled, and could scarcely stand. "And that is Edward; I know his hair as it blows about in the wind."

"And he is waving his cap to us!" said Maggie; and she waved her shawl, as she had done a year ago, but with what different feelings.

"That is John that took off his cap last! I know it is! And I see Trident; he is jumping on Edward. And there are other dogs."

Mark Greely was mounted on the mast of a ship in the harbour. Had he seen his father? Margaret tried to find him out, but could not.

The ship was steering for the mouth of the Dee. The tide served to bring her up to the pier. The men were ready with ropes to haul her up. She was very near now. The sails were furled; the engine's speed was

slackened. Sir Hugh led Mrs. Armstrong down to the end of the pier, and Margaret and her aunt followed; every one stood aside to leave them a clear place. Cheers sounded from the shore, and were answered from the ship.

Many names were called and answered; "And are ye weel?" "Better nor I ever was i' my life!" "And are ye come hame again?" "Oh, ay! Is a' weel at hame?"

A tremulous voice in an English accent was heard now, calling for "Peter Greely!"

"All right, old woman!" and a long weather-beaten face, rather pale, but looking as grave and important as when he sailed away, looked over the side. They were "All right!" Not one was lost but poor Tom Bolt, and he was an Englishman. No heart there would be saddened for his sake.

The "Constance" was moored to the pier. A plank was thrown across, and the hands of her husband and her son were stretched out from the ship to guide Mrs. Armstrong on board, Margaret following her. They led her below instantly. No one intruded on that meeting.

John bounded across the gangway to Sir Hugh and Miss Armstrong, and they returned with him to the deck; then two sailors were stationed to give his request that no one else should come on board till Captain Armstrong and his family had left the ship.

They did not wait long. First the brother and sister came up, hand in hand, and Sir Hugh looked with delight at his favourite Edward; then their father and mother. Mrs. Armstrong leaned on her husband's arm; her other hand was locked in that of the young commander, who had brought her treasures back to her.

Then a cheer, such as had not been heard on that pier for many a day, rang through the air; a cheer for the lost who were found.

APPENDIX,

WITH THE STORY OF THE "FOX."

THE history of Arctic adventure would be left incomplete unless I added the events which have happened since the date of the conclusion of my story.

When the "Assistance" and "Resolute" were sent out in 1852, as has already been mentioned, with the twofold object of searching for Franklin and for Captain Collinson's expedition, they were accompanied by the "Intrepid" and "Pioneer," two steam-tugs, and by the "North Star," which was stationed at Beechey Island, the whole squadron being under the command of Sir Edward Belcher. Of all these vessels he only brought one home, abandoning the other four in the ice in August, 1854. Their crews returned in the "North Star," together with Captain M'Clure and the remainder of the crew of the "Investigator."

One of these poor deserted ships, however, took the matter into her own hands, made her escape, and is safe in England after all. On a fine summer day an American vessel met the "Resolute" in the North Atlantic Ocean. She was exactly in the order in which she was abandoned. They took her in tow and carried her to America, but the American Government bought her from her captors, fitted her up like her former self, and sent her as a present to Queen Victoria. It was a pretty compliment on their part; and as to the "Resolute," every one must own the good ship, which we also remember with gratitude for her rescue of Captain M'Clure, well deserves her name.

The next event I have to record gave universal pleasure in England. It was the safe return of Dr. Kane from Smith Sound. The news did not reach England till the end of the year 1855, and as he went out in 1853 to that remote region in his little brig, the "Advance," without any consort, there had been much anxiety about him. He had been obliged to abandon his ship in the ice, but by extraordinary energy brought his crew safe back in two boats, named the "Hope" and the "Faith." They had dragged

their boats over ice from the 17th of May to the 19th of June, and then launched them in the sea, when at last the ice gave way, near Cape Alexander, and landed at Upernavik, in Greenland, on the 3rd of August. They had lived eighty-four days in the open air, and had endured extreme fatigue, hunger, and cold, and nothing could have saved them from death but his having clothed them in skins, and taken some hints from the Esquimaux diet. They had embarked in a trader bound for Shetland, when an American barque and steamer, sent in search of them, hove in sight, and they were received on board with joy, and taken to New York. They had made extensive sledge-journeys in search of Franklin—fruitlessly, of course; but while making them, had delineated 960 miles of coast, and penetrated to within eight degrees of the Pole: at which point two of Kane's company report having seen open sea beyond the ice to the northward, with breakers dashing against the cliffs, and abounding in birds and animal life, but which they were totally unable to reach. Dr. Kane had become, through his most interesting accounts of his voyages, and his generous enthusiasm for Franklin, like a brother among us, and it was with deep sorrow that, not long after his return, we heard of his early and lamented death.

Meanwhile it seemed as if Dr. Rae's melancholy news from the Great Fish River had quenched the desire for further search. Mr. Anderson, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, had indeed been commissioned to visit Montreal Island and the neighbourhood, but he added very little information. He found a few more relics, and heard the same reports from the Esquimaux of the party of white men who had died of starvation.

We come now to the "Fox."

There were many people in England who felt that more should be done, and that an expedition ought to be sent to the site of the calamity that had befallen Franklin. Foremost among these was Lady Franklin. She wrote to Lord Palmerston in 1856, urging upon him the error of trusting entirely to vague reports gleaned from the Esquimaux; reminding him that the "Erebus" and "Terror" might still be entire among the ice—that some of their crew might yet exist among the natives—that at all events some more certain information might be gained of their fate—and intreating that a ship might be sent out by Peel Sound. Not succeeding, she completed her list of noble sacrifices in the cause, by taking the charge on herself, for the third time, and purchased the "Fox" yacht, and engaged Captain McClintock to take the command. She had sent the "Prince Albert" twice in the hope of rescuing her husband; the "Fox" was to go only to gather the sad certainty as to his death.

Captain M'Clintock had been well known in former Polar voyages, and was celebrated in Sir Edward Belcher's squadron for some extraordinary sledge-journeys. The little ship in which he has accomplished this final voyage was built at Aberdeen in 1856 by the well-known ship-builders, Messrs. Hall and Co., for Sir Richard Sutton, who, when he gave the order, said he did not want a racing-yacht, but a good strong ship for navigating the northern seas, as he meant to go to Norway, Iceland, and Spitzbergen in her. No expense was spared in her construction, and she was fitted with a small pair of auxiliary engines, with screws of fourteen nominal horse-power. Her general dimensions are—length 122 feet, breadth 24 feet, depth $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet; her gross tonnage, 177 tons; register, 155 tons.

Sir Richard Sutton did actually go to Norway in her in the summer of 1856, but he died suddenly soon after his return, and the "Fox" was left in the hands of the builders. Then it was that Captain M'Clintock went down to view her, and gave such an opinion of her (the Halls at the same time strongly recommending her), that Lady Franklin made the purchase, and had her strengthened in every manner that the experience of Captain M'Clintock and the builders could suggest. Though she was sold for half her value, and every economy consistent with strength observed in refitting her; though the work was executed at prime cost by the builders; though Mr. Rennie, of Aberdeen, managed all the business without fee or reward; and though Lieutenant Cunningham made her a present of a suit of his reefing gear, yet the equipment and despatching of the vessel must have cost Lady Franklin many thousands of pounds.

The "Fox" left Aberdeen harbour direct for the Arctic seas on the 29th of June, 1857, a great number of people being collected to see her sail. Her crew consisted of twenty-three in all. Mr. Petersen, formerly with Dr. Kane, acted as interpreter, and was afterwards recognized by the Esquimaux at Cape York.

By Captain M'Clintock's report to the Admiralty, it appears that he passed the first winter in the ice of Davis' Straits, reached Peel Sound in the summer of 1858, wintered in a harbour at the eastern entrance of Bellot Strait, and that it was in the spring of the present year that all the important discoveries he has made were accomplished by means of sledge-journeys.

It appears that he himself made a journey, accompanied by Petersen and the quartermaster, with two dog-sledges, so early as February, in very severe weather, during several days of which the mercury was frozen, towards the magnetic pole, in hopes of meeting with Esquimaux, and that he was successful, having remained among a tribe of them for four days. He found these

people well supplied with wood and iron, which they said they obtained from a boat left by the white men on the great river. A ship, they said, had been crushed by the ice off the north shore of King William's Island, several years ago, but all her people landed safely and went away to the Great Fish River, where they died. Some of the natives said a second ship had drifted ashore, and they got riches of all kinds out of the wreck.

On the 2d of April the sledge journeys began in earnest, Captain McClintock, Lieutenant Hobson, and Captain Young taking different routes. The results are most important. The whole of the coast of Boothia, hitherto unknown, was traversed; King William's Island, Point Ogle, Montreal Island, and Barrow Island, explored; and any Esquimaux to be found within these limits visited and questioned;—the whole search lasting till August.

"The white men dropped by the way as they went towards the great river;"—this was the account given by the Esquimaux: and numbers of articles they possessed showed that white men had been among them; but it was not till the 24th of May, ten miles from Cape Herschel, that Captain McClintock's party found a bleached skeleton, with fragments of European clothing near it. Eleven years ago this poor man had "dropped by the way."

Many cairns were found and searched for records, in vain; all seemed to have been disturbed, and the records removed by the natives. Can this be because they were enclosed in tin cases? Written documents must surely have been valueless to the people. At last, on the ground between Capes Victory and Crozier, the traces of natives ceased; and here there were cairns undisturbed. It was near Point Victory that Lieutenant Hobson had pitched his tent, near a large one, when he found a small tin case lying among loose stones near the top, which contained a written record, the substance of which is as follows:—

"This cairn was built by the Franklin Expedition upon the assumed site of James Ross's pillar, which had not been found. The 'Erebus' and 'Terror' spent their first winter at Beechey Island, after having ascended Wellington Channel to lat. 77° N., and returned by the west side of Cornwallis Island. On the 12th of September, 1846, they were beset in latitude 70° 5' N. and longitude 98° 23' W. Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June, 1847. On the 22d April, 1848, the ships were abandoned five leagues to the N.N.W. of Point Victory; and the survivors, a hundred and five in number, landed here under the command of Captain Crozier."

This paper was dated 25th April, 1848, and upon the following day they intended to start for the Great Fish River. The total

loss by deaths in the expedition up to this date was nine officers and fifteen men. A vast quantity of clothing and stores of all sorts lay strewn about, as if here every article was thrown away which could possibly be dispensed with—pickaxes, shovels, boats, cooking utensils, iron-work, rope, blocks, canvas, a dip-circle, a sextant engraved "Frederic Hornby, R.N.," a small medicine chest, oars, etc.

A few miles southward, across Back Bay, a second record was found, having been deposited by Lieutenant Gore and M. Des Vœux, in May, 1848. It afforded no additional information.

Many a question anxiously asked for years is answered by this record. It appears that Franklin first tried the northern route, but took the southern on his second season. That he died on board his own ship before the fatal necessity of abandoning her may, let us hope, bring some comfort to Lady Franklin. Apparently it was not long before disasters began among the retreating crew.

"When in lat. $69^{\circ} 9' N.$ and long. $99^{\circ} 27' W.$," says Captain McClintock, "we came to a large boat, discovered by Lieutenant Hobson a few days previously, as his notice informed me. It appears that this boat had been intended for the ascent of the Fish River, but was abandoned apparently upon a return journey to the ships, the sledge upon which she was mounted being pointed in that direction. She measured 28 feet in length by $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, was most carefully fitted, and made as light as possible; but the sledge was of solid oak, and almost as heavy as the boat.

"A large quantity of clothing was found within her; also two human skeletons. One of these lay in the after part of the boat, under a pile of clothing; the other, which was much more disturbed, probably by animals, was found in the bow. Five pocket-watches, a quantity of silver spoons and forks, and a few religious books were also found; but no journals, pocket-books, or even names upon any article of clothing. Two double-barrelled guns stood upright against the boat's side, precisely as they had been placed eleven years before: one barrel in each was loaded and cocked. There was ammunition in abundance; also 30lbs. or 40lbs. of chocolate, some tea, and tobacco. Fuel was not wanting: a drift-tree lay within one hundred yards of the boat."

We see, by the contents of the boat, that neither cold nor hunger destroyed these men. It is Captain McClintock's opinion that the whole party had been much enfeebled by disease before they left the ship. They had been three winters in the ice. We remember the enfeebled state of the "Investigator's" crew under similar circumstances. If the "Resolute" had not rescued them,

and they had attempted their escape in their boats, it is probable their fate would have been equally terrible.

No portion of the wrecks of the "Erebus" and "Terror" were discovered.

The "Fox" was got out of harbour on the 9th of August, and Captain M'Clintock's despatches, from the Isle of Wight are dated the 21st of September. He has brought home great numbers of the relics found in the cairns and the boat, or obtained by barter from the natives.

He closes his despatch by a warm eulogium on the entire devotion of his men to the cause which Lady Franklin has so nobly sustained, without which so great a work could never have been accomplished by so small a crew. He says nothing of his own fatigue and endurance, but he tells us that Lieutenant Hobson was unable to stand when he returned from his sledge-journey, and that Captain Young suffered painfully from his excessive exertions. He mentions the death of four of his crew.

It is, indeed, this steadfast perseverance, this entire devotion to duty, that redeems our history of Arctic adventure from the gloom that might otherwise settle over it. In spite of hardships and sufferings scarcely credible; in spite of failure, peril, and death itself, have the crews of many a ship, for the space of three hundred years, gone resolutely on, and have at last conquered. All that England had required of them is done. THE COASTS OF THE POLAR SEAS ARE KNOWN; THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE IS DISCOVERED; AND THE FATE OF THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION IS ASCERTAINED.

THE END.

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